



# Proclamation

By the Mayor of Prattville, Alabama

*WHEREAS, last year, one in every four of the 940,872 Alabamians living in poverty experienced legal problems, with the majority of these civil problems being consumer issues—creditor harassment, utility non-payment, bankruptcy; health concerns - Medicaid, government insurance, nursing homes; family law problems—divorce, child support, custody, abuse; employment -unemployment benefits, pension, lost job; and housing issues—unsatisfactory repairs, foreclosure, eviction, poor living conditions; and*

*WHEREAS, eight percent of the citizens in Prattville live in poverty and lack access to legal assistance for their problems that are often critical to their safety and independence, forcing them to solve complex legal problems on their own. Unlike the criminal defense system, funding for legal aid for low-income Alabamians is dire, with the consequences being a lack of access to justice, which is devastating for the poor and weakens our democratic society as a whole; and*

*WHEREAS, there are fewer than 55 paid legal aid lawyers to serve the more than 422,119 low income households in Alabama. Although 17 percent of the members of the Autauga County legal community donate their time and talents in free legal services annually, a huge unmet need for legal assistance remains for the disadvantaged in our area; and*

*WHEREAS, sponsored by the Alabama State Bar and its Pro Bono Celebration Task Force, with support from local bar associations statewide, Pro Bono Week 2009 will educate the public about the extensive work Alabama lawyers are doing in donating their time to improve the lives of vulnerable citizens, and will encourage more individuals in the legal community to become involved in pro bono work and financially support the legal aid system; and*

*WHEREAS, Pro Bono Week 2009 will feature legal aid clinics throughout the State to assist Alabamians who greatly need legal assistance, but cannot afford to pay for that help and will feature service projects to help lawyers and law students make volunteer connections with legal aid organizations serving these low-income citizens.*

*NOW THEREFORE, I, Jim Byard, Jr., Mayor of the City of Prattville, Alabama, do hereby proclaim October 25-31, 2009 as*

## PRO BONO WEEK

*and urge all residents to recognize the contributions of our legal community who help those most in need.*



Given Under My Hand and the  
Seal of the City of Prattville on  
the 16<sup>th</sup> day of October 2009.

  
Mayor Jim Byard, Jr.