

Dear PBA House of Delegates Member,

I have heard it said often recently that this is a bad time to be a lawyer. That a down turn in the economy is a bad thing for lawyers and it is a bad time to be a lawyer. I think it is a time of great opportunity for lawyers to harness our collective knowledge and skill sets to make life better for people. One way to make a difference, to make life better for Pennsylvanians as a group of lawyers, as the organized bar, is to do more pro bono work in the coming year. The PBA Board of Governors adopted a leadership pro bono policy on June 20, 2007. Each year, Board members are required to provide written certification to the secretary that during the prior twelve month period the member has taken at least one new pro bono matter or continued work on an ongoing pro bono matter, or has provided alternative support if such member is prohibited from handling a pro bono matter or is prevented from handling a pro bono matter due to other circumstances.

On June 22, 2007, this body voted to approve the recommendation of the Legal Services to the Public Committee regarding pro bono service. This recommendation is important to remember as the members of this House agreed that each Pennsylvania attorney should comply with the local/county or state bar association pro bono aspirational goal, expectation and/or rule, where the attorney's practice is conducted.

During my year as PBA President, I am asking that each member of the House of Delegates complete the attached House of Delegates pro bono certification form. In addition, I intend to ask every county bar association to institute the same type of pro bono certification initiative in each of the 67 counties across Pennsylvania.

The time has never been more critical to increase our efforts to provide pro bono legal services to the poor and underserved of our Commonwealth. With the down turn in the economy, we are facing a decrease in both federal and state funding for legal services and a decrease in the funds generated by our IOLTA accounts as a result of low interest rates. Yet, the down turn in the economy increases the need for legal services as the number of mortgage foreclosures and domestic violence cases increases. I know that all of us are already providing pro bono services but I believe that we must embrace this opportunity to do more to help those less fortunate and to demonstrate that we are an organization of lawyers with big hearts.

I hope that you will join in this effort by completing the attached form and returning it to David Trevaskis at the PBA prior to May 6, 2011.

With much appreciation,



Gretchen A. Mundorff