



THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA

1818 MARKET STREET  
37<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR  
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103

RONALD D. CASTILLE  
CHIEF JUSTICE

April 2, 2014

Dear Pennsylvania Attorney:

Over the past few years I have written asking for your support of equal access to justice for all through legal services. In this my last year on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, I make the plea one final time as chief justice of Pennsylvania.

Senate Judiciary Committee hearings held last year across Pennsylvania under the leadership of Sen. Stewart Greenleaf underscored the great need among the poor for legal services. Cuts in legal funding and historically low interest rates on attorney trust accounts have combined to reduce the legal representation of the poor; one legal aid provider estimated during the hearings that the entire system is only helping one out of every 10 persons who qualify for such services.

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court has supported civil legal aid in a variety of ways, from providing new avenues for funding to setting up a loan forgiveness program for legal services practitioners. The Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, in partnership with our regional legal aid providers and a network of specialty legal aid programs, helps provide the framework and structure for legal assistance for the poor. Every lawyer in Pennsylvania contributes \$35 to civil legal aid through the IOLTA portion of the annual licensing fee. And our law schools inculcate the values of pro bono service in the next generation of Pennsylvania lawyers.

Every component of the justice system is offering support, but it is the volunteer efforts of attorneys--whether in direct representation of clients or further financial support beyond that mandatory payment-- that are essential for success.

I join Pennsylvania Bar Association President Forest Myers in calling on each of the nearly 70,000 attorneys registered in the Commonwealth to make a personal commitment to provide whatever pro bono service you can through direct representation to the poor and financial support of our legal aid programs. Please check out [palawhelp.org](http://palawhelp.org) and register with [paprobono.net](http://paprobono.net) to see the range of opportunities for pro bono service.

If you have not yet gotten involved, now is the time. For those of you who already do so much, thank you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ronald D. Castille".

Chief Justice Ronald D. Castille