



CATHERINE D. KIMBALL
CHIEF JUSTICE

Supreme Court

STATE OF LOUISIANA

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TO: ALL LOUISIANA JUDGES

FROM: CHIEF JUSTICE CATHERINE D. KIMBALL

RE: ENCOURAGING PRO BONO SERVICES IN CIVIL MATTERS

Nationally, at least half of the potential clients requesting assistance from a civil legal services program are turned away due to lack of resources at a legal services program. In Louisiana, the numbers are probably higher because our programs depend almost exclusively on federal funding and IOLTA. As you know, these potential clients live at or below federal poverty guidelines, and many are still experiencing legal problems related to recent natural and manmade disasters.

The ratio of legal services attorneys to those potentially eligible for services is 1:6,861, far higher than the ratio of attorneys available to the general population. That poor Louisianans cannot find legal representation is probably obvious to you, since most courts and administrative staffs are taxed as a result of the increase in self-represented litigants. One solution is the recruitment of *pro bono* volunteers, whose ranks have diminished over the past decade. That's where we need your help.

The Supreme Court believes that judges can assist in efforts to revitalize *pro bono* volunteerism, and I write to ask you to consider taking steps to do so. We need you to assist the justice community in bridging the rapidly growing gap between the legal needs of those who cannot afford civil legal services and the resources available to meet those needs.

We encourage you to do what you can to encourage *pro bono* work in your community. We ask you to participate in events to recognize lawyers who do *pro bono* work, to consider special procedural or scheduling accommodations for lawyers who are volunteering their services, and, where practical, to act in an advisory capacity to *pro bono* programs. Should you need more information on how your judicial leadership can help, please contact Monte Mollere, (mmollere@lsba.org; 800 421-5722 or (504) 619-0146 at the Louisiana State Bar Association's Access to Justice Department.

The lack of legal representation impedes access to justice. You can play a key role in increasing the number of attorneys who volunteer to take cases for people who cannot afford civil legal representation. Please consider becoming an active voice for this cause.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Catherine D. Kimball".