

2021 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 160

BY REPRESENTATIVE GARY CARTER

A RESOLUTION

To recognize Wednesday, June 2, 2021, as Civil Legal Aid Day at the state capitol.

WHEREAS, even though the outcome of civil legal matters often results in life-altering consequences, indigent citizens have no right to counsel in civil matters; and

WHEREAS, a basic tenet of a just society is the provision of equal access to legal services, a tenet that is essential to the achievement of fairness in our civil justice system; and

WHEREAS, a foundation of our legal system is access to legal services, regardless of a citizen's ability to pay; and

WHEREAS, at 20%, Louisiana's poverty rate is among the nation's highest, and an estimated 230,000 poor Louisiana citizens will need legal services each year; and

WHEREAS, in 2020, the Acadiana Legal Service Corporation and the Southeast Louisiana Legal Services Corporation helped 32,494 people to achieve increased access to safety, employment, and security; and

WHEREAS, the Acadiana Legal Service Corporation and the Southeast Louisiana Legal Service Corporation provide legal representation in merited cases to Louisiana's poor and work to ensure equal access and justice for all; and

WHEREAS, these organizations help historically disadvantaged constituents with legal matters, including veterans seeking service benefits, victims of domestic violence seeking protection against abusers, senior citizens fighting consumer fraud, homeowners opposing unlawful foreclosure, and parents seeking child support; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of all stakeholders in Louisiana's justice system to ensure access to legal services; and

WHEREAS, each year, Louisiana attorneys provide hundreds of thousands of hours in volunteer legal services; and

WHEREAS, a study commissioned by the Louisiana Bar Foundation found that the total net social return on investment for Louisiana's legal aid programs during the 2020 fiscal year was 918%, so for every dollar the state invests in Louisiana's civil legal aid providers, these programs deliver \$9.18 in immediate and long-term financial benefits; and

WHEREAS, investment in civil legal aid benefits families, schools, businesses, government agencies, and the state as a whole.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby recognize Wednesday, June 2, 2021, as Civil Legal Aid Day at the state capitol and does hereby extend sincere thanks to the caring professionals who provide civil legal aid to the citizens of Louisiana.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES