

By Senator Fasano

11-02290-10

20102736

Senate Resolution

A resolution honoring the attorneys and staff of Florida Legal Services and recognizing their dedication and commitment to representing vulnerable Floridians in the civil justice system.

WHEREAS, many residents of this state continue to struggle in poverty, unemployment is at an all-time high at nearly 12 percent, more than a million Floridians are out of work, more than 500,000 Florida homeowners found themselves in foreclosure proceedings in 2009, up 213 percent from 2007, 2.5 million households lack sufficient money to put food on the table and are currently receiving food stamp assistance, and, on any given night, there are about 57,000 Floridians without homes for shelter, and

WHEREAS, in 1973 The Florida Bar, working with then-Governor Reuben Askew, formed Florida Legal Services to expand the availability of civil legal assistance to the poor in Florida, and

WHEREAS, the Florida Legislature has recognized the importance of civil legal assistance to the poor and the improvement of access to justice by passage of the Florida Access to Civil Legal Assistance Act, and

WHEREAS, today there are 31 legal aid programs and 480 attorneys serving the residents of the state's 67 counties, and each year the legal needs of more than 98,000 Florida families are addressed by these programs, and

WHEREAS, legal aid attorneys and their support staff protect the most vulnerable Florida residents from continued

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30 domestic violence, prevent scam artists from victimizing the  
31 elderly, and respond to situations involving mortgage fraud,  
32 denial of health care, and much more, and

33 WHEREAS, Florida Legal Services, working with local legal  
34 services and legal aid attorneys throughout the state, has  
35 successfully worked with the Legislature to secure legal  
36 protections for people moving from welfare to work and for  
37 Medicaid recipients, to regulate day-labor operations, to win  
38 legal protections for the homeless and residential tenants, and  
39 to enact restrictions on predatory mortgage lending practices as  
40 well as enhanced regulation of title loan operations, and

41 WHEREAS, Florida Legal Services and legal aid attorneys and  
42 staff demonstrate commitment, dedication, and excellence in  
43 securing access to justice for this state's most vulnerable  
44 residents, NOW, THEREFORE,

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46 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

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48 That the dedicated attorneys and staff of Florida Legal  
49 Services are recognized for their commitment and tireless work  
50 on behalf of Floridians who, otherwise, would go without  
51 representation in the civil justice system.