

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the Town Council has been advised that New Mexico is ranked 50th in Poverty, with one in five of the state's 2,045,535 people living far below the poverty line. People living in poverty experience a greater degree of legal problems, the majority of which are civil matters: divorce, child support/custody, domestic violence, grandparents rights, kinship guardianship and issues arising from CYFD actions; consumer matters (creditor, utility, and bankruptcy issues); mental health and substance abuse issues, and problems in gaining access to services (Medicaid, government insurance, and treatment facilities); employment issues (the loss of a job, subsequent unemployment benefits, and pension matters); and housing issues (foreclosure, eviction, poor living conditions and unsatisfactory repairs); and

WHEREAS, each year the low-income persons and elders in the Town of Silver City lack access to legal assistance for their legal problems that are often critical to their safety and independence, forcing them to resolve complex legal problems on their own; and

WHEREAS, the need for legal aid and pro bono services in New Mexico is dire, funding for low-income New Mexicans who need civil legal assistance has not yet been met, with the consequences being a lack of access to justice which is devastating for the poor and which weakens our democratic society as a whole; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council has been advised that 72% of the members of the legal community in the Sixth Judicial District donate their time and talents in the form of free legal services each year, a huge unmet need for legal assistance remains for the disadvantaged in our area; and

WHEREAS, sponsored by the Access to Justice Commission and the American Bar Association with support from local pro bono committees statewide, **Pro Bono Week** will educate the public about the extensive work New Mexico lawyers are doing when they donate their time to improve the lives of vulnerable community members, and will encourage more individuals in the legal community to get involved in pro bono work and to help financially support the legal aid system; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council has been advised that **Pro Bono Week 2016** will feature legal clinics throughout the state, assisting New Mexicans who greatly need this assistance but cannot afford to pay for that help, and will also feature recognition events throughout the State of New Mexico honoring lawyers and judges for making a difference in New Mexico;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Ken Ladner, Mayor of the Town of Silver City, Grant County, New Mexico, in view of the inherent value of this, do hereby proclaim October 24 to 28, 2016 to be

"Pro Bono Week"

and urge all residents to recognize the contributions of our legal community helping those most in need.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused this official seal of the Town of Silver City to be affixed this 25th day of October, 2016.

(Seal)

Ken Ladner, Mayor

Attest:

Ann L. Mackie, Town Clerk