



Vermont Supreme Court
Declaration of Access to Justice Month

Whereas, the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators have long recognized that the promise of equal justice is not realized for individuals and families who have no meaningful access to the justice system and that the Judicial Branch has the primary leadership responsibility to ensure access for those who face impediments they cannot surmount on their own; and

Whereas, thousands of Vermonters each year have no lawyer in cases that may have a profound impact on their housing, family, livelihood and well being; and

Whereas, ensuring access to justice in adversarial proceedings involving basic human needs, such as shelter, sustenance, safety, health, and child custody is one of the Vermont Judiciary's most pressing priorities; and

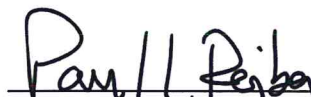
Whereas, the Vermont Judiciary, in collaboration with other access-to-justice stakeholders, is committed to fostering a continuum of meaningful and appropriate services to help Vermonters meaningfully engage with the judicial system when their essential civil legal needs are at stake; and

Whereas, strategies to provide such a range of supports include expanded self-help services to litigants, effective use of technology, new or modified court rules and processes that facilitate access, limited representation by lawyers helping with discrete tasks, increased free and low cost representation of clients by the private bar, and greater availability of legal aid services; and

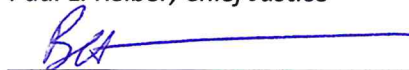
Whereas, the Vermont Judiciary joins the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators in supporting the aspirational goal of 100 percent access to effective assistance for essential civil legal needs;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Vermont Supreme Court declares the month of November to be Access to Justice Month. The Court urges stakeholders in the access to justice community to take steps to shine a light on their work, highlight the challenges facing low income Vermonters who have cases in court, and develop collaborative proposals to help Vermont move closer to the aspirational goal of 100 percent access to effective legal assistance for essential civil legal needs.


Dated November 5, 2019.



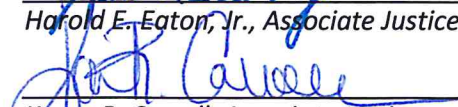
Paul L. Reiber, Chief Justice



Beth Robinson, Associate Justice



Harold E. Eaton, Jr., Associate Justice



Karen R. Carroll, Associate Justice