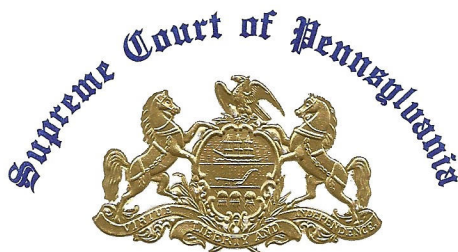


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Chief Justice Debra Todd

May 2026

Dear Pennsylvania Lawyer:

May 1 marks the annual commemoration of Law Day. President Dwight D. Eisenhower declared May 1, 1958 as the first "Law Day". He recognized that the guarantee of fundamental rights of individuals under the law is "the heart and sinew of our Nation" and distinguishes our governmental system from those that "rule by might alone." He sought to remind all Americans that our right to live under the rule of law must not be taken for granted. Three years later, in 1961, Congress officially designated May 1st as Law Day.

The ABA's 2026 Law Day theme is "The Rule of Law and the American Dream." I join the PBA's outgoing President, Kristen Hamilton, and incoming president, James R. Antoniono, in encouraging you to protect the rule of law and the American dream through Pro Bono service.

Pennsylvania lawyers contribute to civil legal aid through the IOLTA portion of our annual lawyer registration fee. Financial support is also provided through a portion of class action residual funds in our state courts, and by the Loan Repayment Assistance Program, funded by pro hac vice fees paid by out-of-state attorneys, which makes it easier for law school graduates to pursue positions in public service by working for legal service agencies.

"Hands-on" help can have the greatest impact on those in need. The Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network and its partners provide a framework for legal assistance to the poor. Pro Bono attorneys are encouraged by the PBA and local bar associations to fulfill their aspirational duty under Rule 6.1 of our Rules of Professional Conduct to "render public interest legal service," by contributing their time and expertise to the important work of representing clients who have critical needs but cannot afford to retain private counsel. Furthermore, legal services are enabled by programs such as "emeritus" status under Rule of Disciplinary Enforcement 403, which allows retired attorneys to perform Pro Bono service under the auspices of non-profit legal aid organizations; and Continuing Legal Education Rule 108(f), allowing Pennsylvania lawyers to earn CLE credits for Pro Bono work performed through an accredited CLE Provider.

This Law Day, I encourage all Pennsylvania lawyers and judges to take a few moments to reflect on the meaning of public service and to recommit to protecting and preserving the rule of law and the American dream by supporting legal aid and Pro Bono service across our Commonwealth. For those of you who already engage in public service or Pro Bono representation, I thank you.

Together, we truly can make a difference.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debra Todd".

Debra Todd

