

Yesterday was the 55th anniversary of the famous decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Gideon v. Wainwright*, 372 U.S. 335 (1963). Many if not all previous *Gideon* anniversaries have been marked by disillusionment, outrage or even despair at the vast chasm between the promise of the Court's words, and the subsequent failure of our governmental response at all levels to convert those words into reality. This year, in New York at least, there is reason for hope; because the 2014 settlement of the *Hurrell-Harring* lawsuit in five counties was followed in 2017 by legislation extending the HH public defense reforms statewide; and, early in 2018, by the filing of Executive and Assembly and Senate budget proposals that would appropriate the promised first year of state funding to implement those reforms.

This morning I was informed that an article I wrote, with the considerable help of ILS colleagues, for the *Indiana Law Review* last fall has been published. It is called **The Right To Counsel In The State of New York: How Reform Was Achieved After Decades Of Failure**, and it is attached. It seems an appropriate communication on this day of commemoration.

The hope I expressed above will be realized only if it is accompanied by a fierce determination to accomplish the transformation that the HH reforms and their statewide expansion promise. I should add that such commitment by just one segment of those with responsibility for the preservation of the right to counsel will not suffice. Rather, all public defense providers, all local government officials and all state officials must commit ourselves to achieving what the 2014 Settlement and the 2017 Legislation promise. It will not happen by itself, and it will not happen unless we all work together. So I ask you not only to commemorate the day, and not only to read and share the article with your colleagues, and not only to comment upon it; but for each of us to commit ourselves to getting the job done. If we can together make that commitment and contribute that effort, we will be able to say on *Gideon's* 60th anniversary, in 2023, that we have fulfilled both the purpose of the legislation and the promise of the high-flowing principles enunciated by the Justices on that March day in 1963.

Finally we ought not forget on this day that, in New York, representation of indigent parents – as much of a legal mandate as is public defense -- has yet to achieve similar recognition, funding or legislation to fulfill the promise of our laws. I want you to know that we are working hard to rectify that omission, and that we will redouble our efforts to do so via our work with providers and local and state officials, and our involvement with the Chief Judge's Commission on Parental Legal Representation.

Our best to everyone,

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