

CALL FOR POETRY SUBMISSIONS

CONVICTIONS BEYOND A CONVICTION

HELP PRISONERS' LEGAL SERVICES CELEBRATE NATIONAL PRO BONO WEEK

National Pro Bono Week (October 23rd – 29th) is a time to celebrate and recognize the dedicated work of *pro bono* volunteers, as well as to educate the community about the many legal and other issues faced by our clients. PLS is happy to announce that this year we will again be celebrating National Pro Bono Week with an event highlighting our commitment to serving the incarcerated community.

This will be our 11th year celebrating pro bono work and to start off this second decade, we will also be compiling a book of poetry written exclusively by incarcerated individuals.

Inspired by Brian Stevenson's quote "Each of us is more than the worst thing we've ever done," we are seeking poetry submissions from incarcerated people that focuses on who you are apart from your conviction and incarceration. We want to help you tell people on the outside who you really are.

- *What do you believe in?*
- *What are your ambitions, hopes, and dreams?*
- *What do your children, parents, family, and friends mean to you?*
- *How have your past experiences shaped you as a person?*
- *What do you want others to know about you, beyond your conviction?*

Unlike past years where our Pro Bono Event has focused on specific topics such as solitary confinement, immigration, medical care and education, this year's theme, *Convictions Beyond a Conviction*, is purposely broad. Our goal is to give every incarcerated New Yorker a chance to contribute, express themselves, and have their voices heard. If you speak/write in a language other than English, please feel free to send us a submission in your primary language, that is, the language in which you are most comfortable expressing yourself. We will compile selected submissions into a book of poetry, and some of those poems will be presented by professional actors during a live performance at our National Pro Bono Week celebration.

Poems should be no more than one (1) page in length and mailed to: Pro Bono Director, Prisoners' Legal Services of NY, 41 State Street, Suite M112, Albany, New York 12207, **no later than June 30, 2022.**

By sharing the poems of incarcerated people, we hope to educate the public, and recruit attorneys to take cases *pro bono*, thus increasing access to justice for indigent incarcerated persons across the State. While we cannot guarantee that each piece will be read or included in our publication, we encourage all submissions and will do our best to integrate as many as possible in the book and our event. The book will not be sold for profit and PLS reserves the right to make editorial changes to submissions.

Please note that contributing your story for the Pro Bono Event described above is not the same as seeking legal assistance/representation from PLS. If you are seeking legal assistance, you must write separately to the appropriate PLS office.

PLEASE INITIAL ON THE APPROPRIATE LINE(S) AND SIGN BELOW, AND ENCLOSE WITH YOUR SUBMISSION:

- _____ PLS may use my real name
- _____ I authorize PLS to use my submission in their book of poetry
- _____ I authorize PLS to use my submission at their event
- _____ I authorize PLS to use my submission on their website, in *Pro Se*, and/or for other informational purposes

I consent to PLS including this submission in as part of its book of poetry and National Pro Bono Week event. I understand that my contribution will be retained and may be used again by PLS after the event.

Signature

Date