



County of Sonoma

State of California

Date: March 5, 2024

Item Number: _____

Resolution Number: _____

4/5 Vote Required

Resolution Of The Board Of Supervisors Of The County Of Sonoma, State Of California, Proclaiming March 2024 as National Public Defender Month

Whereas, The County of Sonoma has a longstanding tradition of equal justice regardless of income, having established the Public Defender's Office in 1959. Today the Public Defender's Office has a staff of 61 employees including 37 full-time attorneys that ensure that person's charged with criminal offenses in Sonoma County are provided their Constitutional right to effective legal representation when charged with a crime and unable to afford counsel.; and

Whereas, On March 18, 1963, the United States Supreme Court unanimously ruled that an indigent person in a criminal trial has the right to the assistance of counsel. That right is fundamental and essential to a fair trial, and a trial and conviction without the assistance of counsel violates the Sixth and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution; and

Whereas, the Sonoma County Public Defender's Office is committed to upholding the Constitution, while providing the hope of community reintegration regardless of income.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, in support of the March 18, 1963 decision mandating the right of counsel to the indigent, hereby reaffirm our commitment to ensuring equal justice regardless of income and support for our Public Defender's Office and hereby resolve and proclaim March as National Public Defender Month. Honoring the dedication and contributions public defenders provide in safeguarding the principles of justice and equality and raising awareness of the challenges they face.

Resolution #23-

Date:

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Supervisors:

Gorin:

Coursey:

Gore:

Hopkins:

Rabbitt:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Abstain:

So Ordered.