

# STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

## PROCLAMATION

### PUBLIC DEFENDER DAY

MARCH 18, 2025

WHEREAS, North Dakota values every one of its inhabitants, and all are entitled to legal counsel when facing criminal charges, regardless of their ability to pay; and

WHEREAS, 62 years ago, Clarence Earl Gideon, charged with a crime, could not afford to hire a lawyer, and upon being tried without counsel, was convicted and sentenced to five years in state prison; and

WHEREAS, Gideon submitted a handwritten petition to the U. S. Supreme Court from his prison cell, arguing the U. S. Constitution prohibits a state from sending indigent people to prison without legal representation; and

WHEREAS, on March 18, 1963, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled Gideon's conviction and prison sentence violated the Sixth and 14th amendments to the Constitution because he was not provided a lawyer; and

WHEREAS, on May 15, 1967, the Supreme Court established the constitutional right to counsel for juveniles in delinquency proceedings in the landmark case *In Re Gault*; and

WHEREAS, since statehood North Dakota statutes have required appointment of counsel at public expense for indigents; and

WHEREAS, the North Dakota Commission on Legal Counsel for Indigents was legislatively established in 2005 to manage the delivery of indigent defense services in North Dakota.

NOW, THEREFORE, as Governor of the State of North Dakota, I do hereby proclaim  
March 18, 2025, **PUBLIC DEFENDER DAY** in the State of North Dakota.



  
Kelly Armstrong  
GOVERNOR

ATTEST:   
Michael Howe  
SECRETARY OF STATE