



## *A Proclamation by the Governor*

**WHEREAS**, under the Sixth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States, the obligation to provide effective representation to accused indigent persons at each critical stage of criminal and delinquency proceedings rests with the states and Section 1 of Article 1 of the Nevada Constitution recognizes the inalienable right of persons to defend life and liberty; and

**WHEREAS**, Thomas Wren, known as 'the father of the right to counsel in Nevada', served as a State Assemblyman during the 1875 Nevada State Legislative Session and worked to cement the Silver State's commitment to the right to counsel; and

**WHEREAS**, nearly 90 years before the landmark case *Gideon v. Wainwright* guaranteed indigent persons the right to counsel in felony cases, Nevada strengthened its right to counsel law after a case before the Nevada Supreme Court; and

**WHEREAS**, to maintain a fair and robust adversarial process, which guarantees constitutional protections for each of us, including the right to indigent defense representation at government expense, the public defense function must be considered an equal and valued partner in the criminal justice system in Nevada; and

**WHEREAS**, the fundamental principles of equality and fairness cannot be fully realized under our justice systems without a well-resourced public defense system and prompt access to effective assistance of legal counsel; and

**WHEREAS**, without effective legal representation to challenge the government's evidence, or to present a viable defense, an accused indigent person may remain in jail or detention unnecessarily, improper guilty pleas may be entered, or parents may suffer the unnecessary removal of children from their homes; and

**WHEREAS**, robust indigent defense services protect individuals and the community through providing fair trials, avoiding wrongful convictions, and preventing unnecessary separation of families, the State of Nevada is committed to protecting the individual liberties of persons in this state;

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOE LOMBARDO, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NEVADA**, do hereby proclaim the day of March 18, 2024 as

### **INDIGENT DEFENSE DAY IN NEVADA**



*In Witness Whereof*, I have hereunto  
set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of  
Nevada to be affixed at the State Capitol in Carson City,  
this 6th day of March, 2024.

By the Governor:

Governor

By

Secretary of State

Deputy