



## 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**, 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 people's constitutional protections, 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 an effective legal defense to challenge the government's evidence, or to present a case, 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; and

**WHEREAS**, the State of Nevada is committed to protecting the individual liberties of persons in this state, and to keep this commitment, Assembly Bill 81 was passed during the 2019 Legislative Session, creating the Board of Indigent Defense Services and the Department of Indigent Defense Services;

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, STEVE SISOLAK, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, do hereby proclaim the day of March 18, 2021, as**

### INDIGENT DEFENSE DAY IN NEVADA



IN *Witness* *Whereas* 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 16<sup>th</sup> day of March 2021 a ch 20.

By the Governor:

Governor

*Bairiana K. Ceganski*  
Secretary of State

By \_\_\_\_\_

Deputy