



## **Attorney Volunteer Help Needed:**

### **Districtwide Virtual Pro Se Consults Are Coming!**

**By: Hon. Jacob A. Brown**

I am honored that Chief Judge Caryl Delano asked me to chair a committee that is working to establish a districtwide virtual platform for pro bono consultations for unrepresented/pro se parties in bankruptcy cases in the Middle District of Florida. The Committee includes representatives from each of the volunteer bankruptcy bar and legal aid associations in the Middle District.

Our Court is consistently in the top five in terms of the percentage of pro se parties. Since the start of the COVID pandemic, fewer people are using in-person pro se clinics in Jacksonville, Orlando, and Tampa. We are hoping those clinics start to see more people. The goal here is to lighten the impact pro se filers have on the Court by casting a wider net and supplementing the in-person pro se clinics. Orlando has recently gone live with its virtual consult platform, and we are hoping to go live districtwide in the next 45 days.

We need attorneys across the district to volunteer to accept these consults. We are working to confirm that these appointments will be through the appropriate legal aid organizations so that those associations' malpractice coverage will apply. Pro se parties will also be required to sign a waiver that provides that by receiving advice from a volunteer attorney, the pro se party waives any and all claims he or she may have against the attorney arising out of or related to the advice. We are also hoping that attorneys who take consults with pro se parties needing a little extra help to make their case a success will step up and see the case through to the end.

Serving those in need is part of the calling of our profession. If you are not already actively providing pro bono service, please step up and sign up to take a virtual consult at least once a month. And consider taking a few of those cases to conclusion if you are able. To sign up, please email Kathleen DiSanto at [kdisanto@bushross.com](mailto:kdisanto@bushross.com) and note that you are willing to volunteer. Additional requests to sign up will be forthcoming.

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