



BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA

## A PROCLAMATION

### NATIONAL PUBLIC DEFENDER DAY

- WHEREAS:** The Sixth Amendment guarantees the right to counsel for all accused persons, ensuring legal representation in criminal proceedings; and
- WHEREAS:** The landmark decision in *Gideon v. Wainwright* affirmed that this fundamental right extends to all defendants, regardless of their ability to pay for legal services, thereby establishing a cornerstone of American justice; and
- WHEREAS:** Public defenders in Georgia uphold this constitutional mandate by providing dedicated and professional representation to those unable to afford private counsel; and
- WHEREAS:** Public defenders and their teams work diligently to ensure competent representation and fair trials; and
- WHEREAS:** The Georgia Public Defender Council extends its mission beyond defense through programs like the Ladders Program, supporting education, workforce development, and reduced recidivism; and
- WHEREAS:** Public defenders serve communities statewide, ensuring equal access to justice regardless of location; and
- WHEREAS:** These legal professionals navigate complex criminal proceedings, advocate for their clients' rights, and safeguard the principles of due process that are essential to our system of justice; and
- WHEREAS:** A strong public defense system serves not only individual clients but the broader interests of justice, democracy, and the rule of law; and
- WHEREAS:** National Public Defender Day recognizes and honors the essential contributions of public defenders and their colleagues across Georgia; now
- THEREFORE:** I, BRIAN P. KEMP, Governor of the State of Georgia, do hereby proclaim March 18, 2026, as NATIONAL PUBLIC DEFENDER DAY in Georgia.

In witness thereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Executive Department to be affixed this 9<sup>th</sup> day of February in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand and Twenty-Six.



*B. Kemp*

GOVERNOR

ATTEST

*Lauren M. Curry*

CHIEF OF STAFF



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