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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT PRO BONO COMMITTEE LAUNCHES NEW PRO BONO PLEDGE
Attorneys Pledge to Increase Access to Justice for Area's Neediest

The Fourteenth Judicial Circuit Pro Bono Committee has launched a new Pro Bono Pledge, which recognizes the responsibility of all members of the legal profession – from corporate lawyers to law firm lawyers to solo practitioners to legal staff – to increase access to our legal system. The Pledge calls on law firms and corporate legal departments to:

1. encourage attorneys and legal staff to provide pro bono legal services and in doing so provide an environment which is hospitable to the rendition of such services;
2. designate a primary pro bono point of contact within the firm or corporate law department;
3. consider adopting a written pro bono policy; and
4. recognize attorneys and legal staff who participate in pro bono services, as appropriate.

The Pledge was officially announced on April 4, 2014 and was mailed to law firms and corporate legal departments in the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit in September 2014. Lead signatories include the following:

Bozeman, Neighbour, Patton & Noe	Eagle & Eagle
Califf & Harper	Kenneth Collinson
Coryn & Walker	Lane & Waterman LLP
Deere & Company, Global Law Services Group	Schwiebert Law, P.C.
Douglas C. Scovil L.L.C.	

The Fourteenth Judicial Circuit Pro Bono Committee is joint project of the Public Interest Law Initiative (PILI), Prairie State Legal Services, and local members of the bench and bar. The goal of the Committee is to enhance equal access to justice by encouraging and promoting pro bono work in the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit. The Committee is chaired by Thomas A. Blade, Attorney at Law, and was launched on February 28, 2012. One of the Committee's primary projects is the Volunteer Lawyer Courthouse Project, through which pro bono attorneys are trained to provide legal representation to tenants facing eviction. Volunteer attorneys work at the Rock Island County Courthouse on Fridays providing legal advice and, if necessary, negotiating settlements. The most recent training for the Volunteer Lawyer Courthouse Project was on Friday, October 24. A webcast recording will be available soon on the Committee's website at <http://pili.org/pro-bono/judicial-circuit-committees/14thcircuit>.

As in the Fourteenth Circuit, Pro Bono Committees in Illinois' Third, Fifth, Sixth, and Tenth Judicial Circuits are also launching or have launched their own Pro Bono Pledges to encourage and promote pro bono locally. PILI applauds the efforts of these attorneys in Illinois' Fourteenth Judicial Circuit and across the state to expand access to justice for Illinois' neediest and most vulnerable. More information about the Pro Bono Pledge is available at: www.pili.org/pro-bono/pro-bono-pledge. For more information about PILI's Judicial Circuit Pro Bono Committees, see: www.pili.org/pro-bono/judicial-circuit-committees.

About PILI: PILI's mission is to cultivate a lifelong commitment to public interest law and pro bono service within the Illinois legal community to expand the availability of legal services for people, families and communities in need. PILI envisions a legal community with a deeply rooted culture of service, where law students, lawyers and legal professionals at all stages of their careers engage in public interest law or pro bono work, and remain committed to addressing the unmet legal needs of the poor and underrepresented.

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To learn more about PILI, visit our website at www.pili.org, or contact PILI Executive Director Michael Bergmann at mbergmann@pili.org or 312-832-5129.