Dear Members of the Virginia State Bar:

I wrote you at this time last year alerting you to the opportunity to voluntarily report your pro bono contributions as part of your bar license renewal. I am writing now to encourage you to make that voluntary report on your 2019 renewal application.

Rule 6.1 of the Rules of Professional Conduct establishes an aspirational goal for lawyers to devote at least two percent of their professional time to pro bono service. In 2018, the Supreme Court of Virginia added Paragraph 22 to § IV of Part Six of the Rules of Court to provide for voluntary reporting of pro bono service and contributions. "Annual Dues Statement Section 5," included with the Annual Dues Statement, provides a space where you can make these voluntary reports.

Pro bono legal service is an important professional obligation and can also be a source of great personal satisfaction. If you were able to engage in pro bono practice or make contributions in 2018, I hope that you will take the time to report your contributions so that we can gather reliable data regarding this important effort in Virginia.

If you have no hours or contributions to report this year, I encourage you to engage with your colleagues, your local bar associations, your nearest legal aid office, the Virginia Access to Justice Commission, or the Virginia State Bar to learn more about the opportunities for pro bono service. If you are concerned about whether you are knowledgeable enough to take on a given case, consider the free CLE resources that the Virginia Law Foundation makes available to help lawyers handle pro bono cases in practice areas unfamiliar to them.¹

We know there is a substantial gap between the current need for pro bono services and the number of attorneys who are providing these services. But we need the data that voluntary reporting can provide to determine the full extent of that gap in Virginia. So please, take the time to report your pro bono contributions and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

Sincerely,

Donald W. Lemons

¹ The link is here: https://www.vacle.org/Free_Pro_Bono_Content-pg222.aspx.