

Helping Those Affected by South Georgia Storms

Dear Bar Members,

As you have likely heard already, a large portion of South Georgia was hit hard over the weekend by a series of destructive tornadoes. Tragically, at least 15 people in four counties lost their lives as a result of the storms. Additionally, many homes were demolished, and tens of thousands of electric customers lost power. Gov. Nathan Deal has declared a state of emergency in seven counties while state agencies are assessing and preparing to deal with the aftermath of this devastation.

These events came while residents of the Albany-Dougherty County and the surrounding area were still recovering from damage caused by multiple tornadoes and storms that tore through that area on Jan. 2. More than 450 families were at least temporarily displaced, and numerous businesses, including some law firms, were impacted by that event, according to State Bar Treasurer Ken Hodges of Albany.

I am calling on all members of the State Bar of Georgia to unite behind our fellow citizens and offer any assistance you can to the residents of South Georgia and other areas of our state that were affected by this natural disaster – including any lawyers, judges, court personnel, paralegals and other members of the legal community and their families.

If you'd like to use your legal skills to help disaster survivors, you can register with the Pro Bono Resource Center. [Use this link to volunteer to help](#). By volunteering, you can provide advice, brief representation or other legal assistance on a limited scope basis (See [Bar Rule 1.2](#)) via telephone or by spending a few hours at a disaster assistance center (if a federal disaster is declared) or at your local legal aid office.

As a reminder, the State Bar's SOLACE program exists to allow our members to reach out in meaningful and compassionate ways to others in the legal community in times of need caused by events and situations like this. If you or anyone you know in the legal community are in need of assistance, please contact us immediately at SOLACE@gabar.org or by calling Bonne Cella at [229-387-0446](tel:229-387-0446).

Please join me in extending our thoughts and prayers to our fellow Georgians who have suffered losses and are continuing to recover from this crisis situation.

Sincerely,
Patrick T. O'Connor
President, State Bar of Georgia
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