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Proskauer Virtual Volunteers Support LACBA's Veterans Legal Service Project Clinic

Proskauer For Good Blog on **November 11, 2020**

Next week, Proskauer will headline the Los Angeles County Bar Association's Veterans Legal Services Project (VLSP) clinic. Proskauer attorneys sponsor the clinic every November – but this year's clinic will be very different. The VLSP clinic has adjusted to the realities of 2020 and, in doing so, has found new ways to improve its services to veterans. For many veterans, the transition back to civilian life is challenging, and the unique difficulties posed by the COVID-19 public health crisis has had a tremendous impact on the ability to find legal representation and other crucial services.

The VLSP clinic focuses on providing advice to homeless and at-risk veterans regarding record expungements, as well as outstanding tickets and warrants. Attorneys attending the clinic perform interviews and intakes for the clinic, and provide referrals to the attending veterans.

This year, the November clinic will occur entirely online. Veterans will join via Zoom and then enter break-out rooms with Proskauer attorneys. Last month, during a test run for our headline event, I found that there are many advantages to the clinic's new online platform. First, veterans have greater access to the clinic's services. During the test run, I provided advice to a veteran who called me as an inpatient from a VA hospital. In the past, our services would not have been available to him because of his more immediate medical needs. Second, the clinic no longer uses the stacks of intake sheets familiar to our volunteers from past years. All of our work is now online and immediately uploaded to the Project. It's more efficient and better for the environment. Last, the chat rooms are more private than the large clinic halls and allow veterans to feel more comfortable discussing their personal stories. One of my veterans last month opened up about his military experience in a way that he may not have in a more public environment.

We also continue to build on our long-standing partnerships with the City Bar Justice Center's Veterans Assistance Project in New York and the Legal Services Center of Harvard Law School's Veterans Legal Clinic in Boston to obtain disability benefits for veterans with service-connected disabilities and to petition for "discharge upgrades" to rectify the classifications that partially or entirely bar many veterans from the disability benefits they rightfully deserve. Additionally, Proskauer's Corporate Social Responsibility program strives to improve employment and educational prospects for veterans through mentorship and professional career assistance, and has provided countless former service members with a strong foundation to adjust to life back at home.

I look forward to the day when Proskauer volunteers can stand together beneath the beautiful murals in Bob Hope Patriotic Hall. Regardless of the platform or location, Proskauer attorneys will be there, as we have always been, to assist our nation's heroes.

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