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NEWS RELEASE

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**EOIR Announces the 10th Anniversary of the
Board of Immigration Appeals Pro Bono Project**
A Government Project Truly for the Public Good

FALLS CHURCH, Va. – The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) today is celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) Pro Bono Project. EOIR implemented the Project in January 2001, to improve access to legal information and increase pro bono representation for individuals whom the Department of Homeland Security is detaining while their immigration cases are under appeal. The Project is a joint effort between EOIR and a non-governmental organization (NGO). Since its start, the Project has succeeded in securing pro bono representation for more than 700 aliens around the country - individuals who would not have otherwise had representation.

Immigrants in removal proceedings are not entitled to publicly-funded legal assistance, and many appear before the immigration courts and the BIA without representation. Agencies that provide legal services to immigrants often face difficulties in identifying, locating, and communicating with unrepresented individuals to write and file a timely appellate brief. The Project works with local pro bono attorneys to identify and review cases based on pre-determined criteria. The NGO's attorney then distributes the cases' summaries via e-mail to hundreds of pro-bono representatives nationwide. After an attorney volunteers to take a case, the NGO seeks the respondent's consent to that attorney's representation. When the pro bono attorney files a Notice of Entry of Appearance, the BIA resets the briefing schedule and sends to that attorney a copy of the file. This effort greatly increases the chances of finding a representative who is willing to volunteer time and expertise.

Representation can have a meaningful impact on a respondent's appeal, so the Project often makes a real difference in a respondent's case. Respondents are better able to present their case and articulate their interest in relief when represented. Representation also reduces procedural errors and enables the BIA to provide a more effective and timely case review.

— EOIR —

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The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) is an agency within the Department of Justice. Under delegated authority from the Attorney General, immigration judges and the Board of Immigration Appeals interpret and adjudicate immigration cases according to United States immigration laws. EOIR's immigration judges conduct administrative court proceedings in immigration courts located throughout the nation. They determine whether foreign-born individuals — whom the Department of Homeland Security charges with violating immigration law — should be ordered removed from the United States or should be granted relief from removal and be permitted to remain in this country. The Board of Immigration Appeals primarily reviews appeals of decisions by immigration judges. EOIR's Office of the Chief Administrative Hearing Officer adjudicates immigration-related employment cases. EOIR is committed to ensuring fairness in all of the cases it adjudicates.