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AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION Criminal Justice Section

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June 30, 2014

Dear Colleague,

On behalf of the American Bar Association Criminal Justice Section, please join us on *July 23, 2014*, to launch a new, innovative diversion program from the New Orleans Municipal Court called *Crossroads Diversion*. The program and luncheon will be at the Louisiana State Bar Association located at 601 St. Charles Avenue from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Crossroads Diversion was developed by the New Orleans Task Force of ABA's Racial Justice Improvement Project (RJIP), a project funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Public Welfare Foundation. The Task Force is composed of Chief Judge Desiree Charbonnet, New Orleans, Municipal Court; Deon Haywood, Executive Director, Women With A Vision; Mark Burton, Magistrate and Municipal Court Supervisor, District Attorney's Office; Charlene Larche-Mason, Deputy City Attorney, City Attorney's Office; Henry Dean, Commander of Specialized Investigation Division, NOPD; and Jee Park, Special Litigation Counsel, Orleans Public Defenders.

The members of the Task Force have collaborated closely with each other to expand provision of services in lieu of incarceration to poor, low-level, nonviolent arrestees. Crossroads Diversion is focused on providing alternatives to incarceration to sex workers, many of whom are victims of violence, abuse, trauma and trafficking.

With a generous grant from ABA Criminal Justice Section, the RJIP Task Force has spent this past year developing the diversion program. Nationally, diversion programs have been shown to be effective in reducing recidivism, local jail populations and increasing judicial efficiency. This Task Force recognizes that diversion programs promote efficient and appropriate use of community and criminal justice resources. Further, diversion mitigates the lasting collateral consequences of conviction and incarceration by increasing access to social services. Crossroads participants will learn valuable harm reduction strategies to promote individual and public safety.

At this luncheon, New Orleans RJIP Task Force members will discuss the creation and implementation of the pilot program of *Crossroads Diversion*. As you all know, a successful pretrial diversion program cannot be implemented without the participation and cooperation of community leaders, criminal justice stakeholders, and elected officials; therefore we are inviting you to the luncheon to not only support the work of the Task Force but to collaborate on future projects that improves the criminal justice system to be more fair, just and efficient.

If you cannot attend, please send a representative from your office. We hope to see you on July 23, 2014. Please R.S.V.P. to Salma S. Safiedine at <a href="mailto:s.safiedine@spartnerslaw.com">s.safiedine@spartnerslaw.com</a> by no later than July 18, 2014 to reserve your seat.

Very truly yours,

Iee Park