



## DISABILITY RIGHTS TEXAS – PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES

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## What is Disability Rights Texas?

- ▶ Disability Rights Texas (DRTx) is the federally-designated protection and advocacy organization for the State of Texas.
- ▶ Non-Profit with federal funding and mandate. P&As exist in every State.
- ▶ P&A Network was established in 1975 after Geraldo Rivera's ground-breaking news stories about the Willowbrook facility on Staten Island, NY:
- ▶ [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PA7sX\\_FYSCY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PA7sX_FYSCY)
- ▶ Originally institutional monitoring only.
- ▶ Role expanded after the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) passed in 1990.

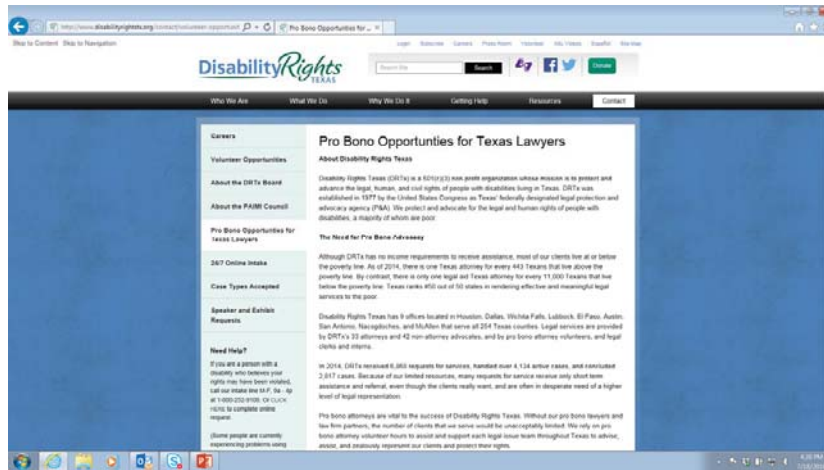
## What do we do? Which clients do we represent?

- ▶ Anyone that can be classified as “disabled” under the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA):
- ▶ <http://legalbrief.com/kirshman.html>
- ▶ Organized in Issue Teams: <https://www.disabilityrightstx.org/>
- ▶ Special Education
- ▶ “HEAT” – Housing, Employment, Accessibility, and Transportation
- ▶ CI/ Healthcare – Community Integration and Healthcare
- ▶ “IRCL” – Institutional Rights and Civil Liberties
- ▶ Foster Care

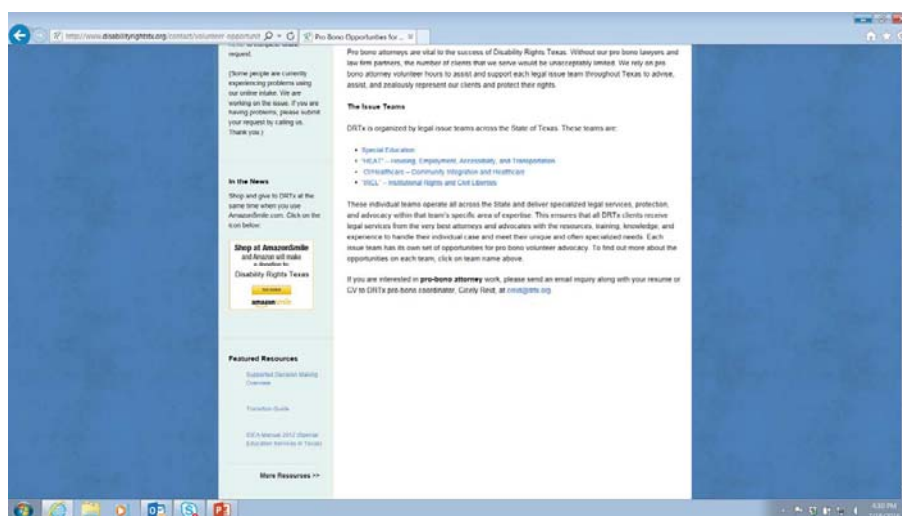
## The Need for Pro Bono Advocacy

- ▶ Most of our clients live at or below the poverty line.
- ▶ 2014 - there was 1 Texas attorney for every 443 Texans that live above the poverty line.
- ▶ By contrast - only 1 legal aid Texas attorney for every 11,000 Texans that live below the poverty line.
- ▶ Most Texas-based law firms do not have a mandatory pro bono requirement.
- ▶ Texas ranks #50 out of 50 states in rendering effective and meaningful legal services to the poor.
- ▶ Recent push/ initiatives by past and current State Bar Presidents to reverse this trend.

## How to volunteer with us



## How to volunteer with us



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First appeared as part of the conference materials for the  
11<sup>th</sup> Annual Advanced Texas Administrative Law Seminar session  
"Pro Bono Opportunities"