



Considering Civil *Gideon*: Expanding Access to Justice in the District of Columbia

**June 22, 2016
6-9 p.m.**

University of the District of
Columbia

David A. Clarke School of Law
Moot Court Room (Room 518)
4340 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

On Wednesday, June 22, Councilmember Kenyan R. McDuffie, Chairperson of the D.C. Council's Committee on the Judiciary, will convene an official public roundtable to consider "Civil *Gideon*" and expanding access to justice in the District of Columbia.

In 1963, the U.S. Supreme Court held in *Gideon v. Wainwright* that criminal defendants have a fundamental right to counsel at the government's expense if they cannot afford one. The phrase "Civil *Gideon*" refers to the national movement to expand this right to counsel to civil cases.

The need for civil representation in the District of Columbia is dire, particularly for low- and moderate-income residents. Recent reports have indicated that 98% of litigants

in domestic violence cases in the D.C. Superior Court have proceeded *pro se*, in addition to 77% of plaintiffs in divorce and custody cases and 97% in landlord/tenant court. The roundtable will include a robust discussion of best practices in other jurisdictions and will explore policy recommendations for the expansion of the right to civil counsel in the District of Columbia.

For more information, please contact the D.C. Council's Committee on the Judiciary at judiciary@dccouncil.us or 724-7808.

