



Puerto Rican Bar Association of Florida, Inc.

PRESS RELEASE

FROM: Puerto Rican Bar Association of Florida, Inc.'s Scholarship Fund
DATE AND TIME: Monday, October 2, 2017 at 1:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Acacia Network - Casa Boricua
1865 N. Econlockhatchee Trail
Orlando, FL 32817

REAL GOOD NEWS! THE PUERTO RICAN BAR ASSOC. OF FL ANNOUNCES ITS “S.T.A.R.” PROGRAM

The members of the Puerto Rican Bar Association of Florida have embarked on a mission to assist in the education of Puerto Rico's future leadership. The law schools and law students of Puerto Rico, like the general student population in the island, were affected by the tremendous damage to their premises after the passage of hurricane Maria. The living conditions of the students across the island are currently below the adequate standards for education. Without the ability to promptly restore electricity or water, there is great uncertainty in Puerto Rico as to when the highways, byways, and school premises will be back to their normal functioning capacity. In addition, many students have lost their homes and belongings and have been literally plunged into poverty overnight.

As a result of our collaboration with the University of Puerto Rico and several Florida schools that have come forward to participate in the receiving of Puerto Rican law students, we can report that, as of today, 51 students from the UPR law school are lined up to come to various law schools in the mainland. The deans of the UPR law school have now coordinated their law students' transfers and ensured that they meet both the law school's stringent requirements and the ABA standards. For more information pertaining to law students from the UPR School of Law and the authorized transferring law schools, please contact Professor Hiram Melendez, former Assoc. Dean at the University of Puerto Rico, at hiram.melendez@upr.edu.

We have not been able to have contact as of yet with the Interamerican University School of Law, or the Pontifical Catholic University of Ponce's School of Law. However, we are hopeful that this will be possible very soon. The process for student transfer must be coordinated between the Deans of each Puerto Rico law schools and the accepting law schools, in order to

ensure ABA compliance. Students are encouraged to continue to try to contact their Deans until they are successful.

This process has not been easy, as the American Bar Association has very strict rules governing transfers of student in the middle of the year. For information on why the ABA restricts transfers of law students, you can contact Maureen O'Rourke at morouke@bu.edu, chair of the American Bar Association Counsel on Legal Education and Admissions and the Accreditation Authority for USA law schools.

Here is a list of law schools that have already expressed their support and willingness to assist:

1. University of Connecticut School of Law
2. Florida A&M University College of Law
3. University of Florida School of Law
4. Florida State University College of Law
5. Barry University School of Law
6. Florida International University School of Law
7. Nova Southeastern University School of Law
8. University of Pittsburgh School of Law
9. University of Missouri School of Law
10. St. Thomas University School of Law
11. Stetson University School of Law
12. Touro School of Law
13. Columbia University School of Law
14. George Washington University School of Law
15. State University School of Law at Buffalo
16. Vermont University School of Law
17. Pennsylvania State University School of Law
18. Iowa University School of Law
19. WMU-Cooley Law School

While the deans of these law schools have been and/or will be negotiating the terms of tuition, matriculation, courses, and credits, the students will additionally face costs not usually associated with school, such as airfare, moving expenses, replacement of clothing, shoes, and electronic equipment lost during the hurricane. To provide assistance during and after this emergency relocation, which in a lot of cases will be inevitable, the PRBAF's Scholarship Fund has created the **Student Temporary Assistance and Relocation (S.T.A.R.) Program**. The STAR program will aim at filling some of the gaps that other organizations, or charities may not be able to fill. Therefore, we are asking the legal community to step up and assist this group of students who will require much more than just financial support; they will also need our cultural and moral support. We ask that you please consider making a tax deductible donation to the Puerto Rican Bar Association of Florida's Scholarship Fund by mailing your contribution to PRBAF, Attn:

Anthony Suarez, 517 West Colonial Drive, Orlando, FL 32804, or visiting www.prbaflorida.org and clicking on the Hurricane Relief Efforts tab to donate through PayPal. You can contact us at info.prbaflorida@gmail.com for further information.

Lastly, the University of Puerto Rico has also established an emergency fund for UPR law students and law school personnel, in order to provide financial support to those most affected by hurricane Maria. For more information on the UPR Emergency Relief Fund, contact Dean Vivian Neptune at vivian.neptune@upr.edu, or make a tax deductible donation directly to Oriental Bank Account number 8017505883 and routing number 221571415.