



PRESS RELEASE

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Coalition Applauds Governor for Designating Oct. 19 as ‘Mediation Day’ in Tennessee

**Administrative Office of the
Courts, Nashville**

**Community Legal Center,
Memphis**

**Community Mediation Center,
Knoxville**

**Community Mediation Services,
Anderson County**

**Institute for Conflict
Management at Lipscomb
University, Nashville**

**Mediation and Restitution/
Reconciliation Services
(M.A.R.R.S.), Memphis**

**MediationWorks!,
Nashville**

**Memphis Bar Association
Alternative Dispute Resolution
Section, Memphis**

**Mid South Mediation Services,
Hohenwald**

**Nashville Conflict Resolution
Center, Nashville**

**Neighborhood Justice Center,
Nashville**

**Tennessee Association of
Professional Mediators (TAPM)**

**Tennessee Bar Association
Access to Justice Committee**

**Tennessee Bar Association
Dispute Resolution Section**

**Tennessee Valley Mediation
Association, Knoxville**

**The Mediation Center,
Columbia**

**VORP of Sumner County Inc.,
Gallatin**

NASHVILLE, Sept. 12, 2006 – The Tennessee Coalition for Mediation Awareness applauds Gov. Phil Bredesen for designating Oct. 19 as “Mediation Day” in Tennessee. The day, which is meant to bring attention to non-adversarial options for conflict resolution, corresponds to International Conflict Resolution Day, which is observed each year on the third Thursday in October. A copy of the governor’s proclamation is attached.

To celebrate Mediation Day and focus public attention on the benefits of dispute resolution alternatives, the member organizations of the coalition are planning a number of events around the state. The coalition will announce event details as they become available.

Mediation is a unique process designed to help people resolve disputes through voluntary settlements, without having to take a case through a lengthy and expensive trial and appeal. A neutral and impartial person, known as the mediator, offers a confidential and non-adversarial setting for disputing parties to meet face-to-face, communicate with each other, find common ground and ultimately reach a mutually acceptable agreement.

In Tennessee, court-based alternative dispute resolution was established statewide in 1996. Mediators listed under Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 31 must meet rigorous standards in education, work experience and training. About 900 individuals are active Rule 31 listed mediators in Tennessee – a 285% increase over the last ten years. These professionals offer services in cases ranging from complex business disputes to contested child custody cases.

In addition to dispute resolution services provided by Rule 31 listed mediators, Victim Offender Reconciliation Programs (known as VORPs) offer mediation services to persons referred by the courts or district attorneys. On the civil case side, trained volunteer mediators provide services at local community centers and courts across the state. And finally, parties turn to private dispute resolution services on the advice of their lawyers, often during the early stages of a lawsuit.

The Tennessee Coalition for Mediation Awareness was formed in August of this year to maximize the resources and expertise of various groups in the state committed to increasing awareness of mediation as an alternative to litigation. The mission of the coalition is to support programs and activities that educate the public and the legal profession on the benefits of mediation and other forms of conflict resolution.