

May 31, 2022

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro, Chair
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations
2413 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations
1026 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Matt Cartwright, Chair
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations
2102 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations
266 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Chair
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen, Chair
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
506 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
521 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees and Subcommittees on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies:

As deans of law schools across the United States, we urge you to provide adequate funding to close the ever-growing justice gap in America. We support the request of the Legal Services Corporation for a significantly increased appropriation in Fiscal Year 2023.

We lead a diverse array of law schools with a wide variety of institutional missions. Our personal views span the political spectrum. Notwithstanding our diverse backgrounds, missions and political perspectives, we express unified support for giving LSC the resources it needs to respond to the growing need for legal services.

Although LSC has enjoyed bipartisan support for more than four decades, the essential legal services provided to low-income Americans have been chronically underfunded. Congress appropriated \$400 million for LSC in FY 1994. Nearly 30 years later, that appropriation has only increased to \$489 million in FY 2022. As a result, LSC's appropriation has fallen far behind the rate of inflation.

Many of us wrote to you last year to draw attention to the heightened need for legal assistance in light of the coronavirus pandemic. Of course the pandemic is not over, and the legal needs arising from it will continue to be evident years after the immediate public health threat subsides. Indeed, the economic and human toll of COVID-19 has exacerbated the well-documented chasm between the legal needs of low-income Americans and the resources available to meet those needs.

LSC-supported legal services organizations help homeless veterans, victims of natural disasters, domestic violence survivors, low-income senior citizens and many other vulnerable populations. Research shows that civil legal aid is a wise public investment. For example, by helping to end cycles of domestic violence and reducing unnecessary evictions and unjust foreclosures, LSC funds obviate the need for public spending in other areas.

Moreover, many of our law schools collaborate with legal service providers funded by LSC to help train the next generation of attorneys. These clinics, externships and other opportunities offer unique learning experiences for students and have a positive impact on our communities.

Fundamentally, we believe that funding for LSC is integral to the fair administration of justice and the rule of law. We teach our students that the ideal of "Equal Justice Under Law" depends on the availability of legal representation. For these reasons, we appreciate your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

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