

**DARLENE HOOLEY**  
5th DISTRICT, OREGON

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON RESEARCH, RANKING MEMBER



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, D.C. 20515-3705**

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May 2, 2005

The Honorable Frank R. Wolf  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Science, State, Justice, Commerce  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We are writing in support of the request by the Legal Services Corporation for \$363.8 million in the Fiscal Year 2006 Science, State, Justice, Commerce and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill. This represents a modest increase of \$33 million over the 2005 appropriation.

Additional funds are clearly needed to see that the doors of justice are open to those in our society who are unable to afford access to the legal system. The budget request first provides an 8.55% increase over the FY 2005 appropriation to offset inflation and funding cuts since the beginning of 2002, and then adds \$1 million to enhance certain under-funded programs serving Native Americans. This money will provide much-needed relief to struggling local legal aid programs, so that they can address the large and growing unmet need for legal services for low-income persons.

Legal services are in greater demand than ever, but the Corporation has suffered serious reductions in federal funding in the last decade. In 1996, Congress cut LSC's budget by 30%, from \$415 million to \$278 million, which forced the closing of more than 100 legal aid offices across the nation. Yet, from 1990 to 2000, the number of people living in poverty in the United States increased by 5.7%. Today, more than 43 million Americans are eligible for federally funded legal assistance – an all-time high. Every year, tens of thousands of eligible persons with major legal problems are turned away because of the local programs' lack of resources. LSC is currently funded with less than half of the real dollars the Corporation was appropriated in FY 1980. Studies funded by the American Bar Association, the Oregon State Bar and other state bar associations have documented a high unmet need, with fewer than 80% of the eligible clients with a legitimate legal problem getting representation.

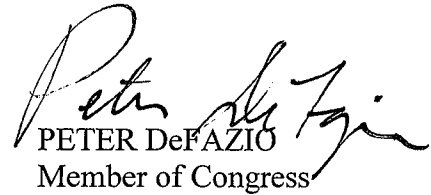
Funds provided by the Corporation are indispensable to the 140 local programs serving every county and Congressional District in the United States. Local clients include the working poor, veterans, family farmers, people with disabilities and low-income military families. Their legal problems involve family relationships, domestic violence, health, employment, housing and many other basic issues. The failure to resolve these problems causes even greater hardship for them and often leads to their reliance on other government programs.

Clearly, large numbers of Americans do not have access to the legal representation they deserve. Without this modest increase in federal funding, many more will be denied fair representation. We urge you to fund the Legal Services Corporation at no less than \$363.8 million to help meet this urgent need. Thank you.

Sincerely,



DARLENE HOOLEY  
Member of Congress



PETER DeFAZIO  
Member of Congress



EARL BLUMENAUER  
Member of Congress



GREG WALDEN  
Member of Congress



DAVID WU  
Member of Congress

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Ranking Member  
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Subcommittee on Science, State, Justice, Commerce  
Washington, D.C. 20515

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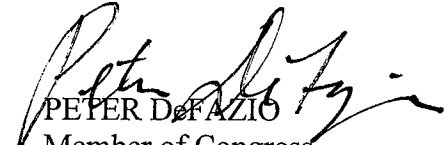
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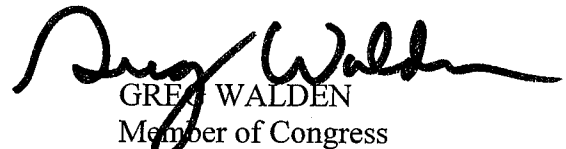
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