

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 22, 2007

The Honorable Alan Mollohan
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice and Science
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H-309 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice and Science
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Mollohan and Ranking Member Frelinghuysen:

We write in support of an increase in Legal Services Corporation (LSC) funding in the Fiscal Year 2008 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies bill. We respectfully request that the Subcommittee provide LSC with a significant increase over the FY 2007 enacted amount of \$348.6 million.

Such an increase is vital for this critical program as a step toward restoring LSC's funding to pre-1996 levels, adjusted for inflation. For FY 1995, Congress funded LSC at \$415 million. The bipartisan LSC Board has requested \$430.6 million for FY 2008 in its attempt to close the "justice gap" over the next several years.

We appreciate the \$22.1 million funding increase for FY 2007, which resulted in an approximate seven percent increase to local programs across the country. However, until FY 2007 the Corporation had experienced a decade of drastic funding cuts, followed by small increases and then more erosion due to flat funding and government-wide rescissions.

Today, 50 million Americans qualify for federally funded legal assistance. However, the 2005 study by the LSC Board of Directors, *"Documenting the Justice Gap in America,"* reported that one in every two individuals who qualify for and actually seek assistance from LSC-funded programs is denied help because of lack of resources. A 1993 American Bar Association study and recent state studies consistently report that despite the combined efforts of LSC-funded programs, state, local and private funding and pro bono efforts, between 70 and 80 percent of the legal needs of the poor are unmet. Each year, tens of thousands of low-

income individuals and families are denied access to justice because of inadequate federal funding.

A crisis exists in our ability to ensure access to the legal system for millions of low-income individuals and families, many of whom are facing new challenges and need assistance. Every day, new situations arise that continue to stretch the ability of our country to ensure that low income persons can peacefully resolve their legal problems through the justice system. The most challenging situations involve: natural disasters (hurricanes, tornadoes, floods); national disasters (9/11); and family disasters (job loss, divorce, health crisis, housing loss).

LSC grantees focus on providing core legal services, in response to the intent of Congress that federal legal services funds should be spent on basic, day-to-day legal problems of individual eligible poor clients. The Corporation currently funds 138 local programs serving every county, state and Congressional District in the United States and its territories. These local programs provide direct services to approximately one million constituents who struggle to get by on incomes below or near the poverty line. Clients include women and their children, survivors of natural and national disasters, the working poor, veterans, family farmers and people with disabilities. Their legal problems involve family relationships (including domestic violence and child custody), housing, health, employment, and many other basic needs. The failure to resolve these issues causes even greater hardship for them, and often leads to their reliance on other government programs.

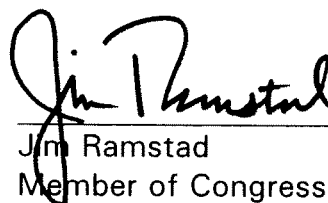
Clearly, large numbers of low-income individuals and families do not have access to the justice system to resolve their basic legal problems. Without continued incremental increases in federal funding, many more will be denied assistance in the future. We urge you to provide a significant funding increase for LSC to help meet this urgent need.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



William D. Delahunt
Member of Congress



Jim Ramstad
Member of Congress

Dennis Moran

Russ Cornsack

Ernie
Jim M

Joe Baca

Eddie Birmingham

Carol Shea-Poore

Raul M. Hijalva

Joan Altomire

Yic Snyder

Dwen Moore

Steve Kogen

D. Berkert

~~Bob~~

Lois Cappa

Betty Sutton

Paul Van Haller

~~Ann~~

Art Abbott

Joe Soback

H M G T

Neil Abernombie

Shelley Mandapito

Peter Welch

Jim Matheson
Jander Lee

Margie K. Hiar

Ainda J. Sanchez

Tom Hill

Kendrick B. Me

Jim McRemoto

Jan Schalsburg

Rud Holt

Alan Cox

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Norm Aiche

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Arsana A. Davis

Rubin Hinjosa

Bill Pasarell, Jr.

Melvin H. Klug

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W. Raymond Dindig

Dana Atteke

Tom Lantos

Brian Paul

Juli Carson

Jill Chester

Corine Brown

Jerrold Nadler

Paul Gordon

Lynn Woolsey

Ernie Berman

Robert Wexler

Melvin L. Watt

Howard L. Berman

Joe Wilson

William R. Roth

Joseph Rouder

Alfred W. White

John Tierney

Edward J. Markey

Gene Green

Tom Harkin

Carlisle B. Maloney

Kevin V. Featheray

Bernie Frank

Jimoh Diaz-Falco

Larry L. Ackerman

Elie E. Camp

Collin C. Peterson

Casey Miller

Donald M. Payne

J. C. McElroy

Chafetz Edwards

Salomonson

Art Kell

Phil Taniguchi

Ray K Davis

Carolyn McCarty

Rick Larson

Michael T. McLeod

Debbie Wasserman Schultz

Rob Casper

Joey Duggitt

Steph Lippman

Tim Ryan

Robert Byrd

Euphemia Parker Sanderlin

Melinda J. Bean

Kathy Castor

Jerry McNery

John Cayer D.
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Eliot L. Engel

Mark Udall

Kristen E. Gillibrand

Anten Davis
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Joe Courtney

Dan O. Matsui

Pete Stark

Tim Murphy

Harry Cullman

W.A. Ror

Porter

John Lewis

Jim M. Brown

Paul

Shelley Berkeley

Bob Butterfield

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John
Giles

Robert L. Rush

Henry H. Norton

Leonard L. Brownell

Walter M. ...

Wm. Tracy Clay

Mike Dyer

John
Ed Bell

Tom East

Julius J. Schwartz

John P. ...

Brian Hays
Charles A. Zazuly

Zoe Lee

Henry ...

Tom Carl

Art ...

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Jim Marshall

Dale E. Under

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Judy Biggott

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Alfred L. Hertz

Rip Boucher

John 1 Salazar

Fred L. Solis

Hank Johnson

John B. Ruan