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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 19, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: GENERAL HAIG  
FROM: NOEL KOCH  
SUBJECT: Legal Services Signing Statement

Attached is a final draft of the proposed legal services signing statement. This has been approved by Roy Ash, Anne Armstrong, Dean Burch, Jim Cavanaugh for Ken Cole, Len Garment, Paul O'Neill, Powell Moore for Bill Timmons, and Pat Buchanan has certain reservations (memo attached).

A contingency statement on Franco in case it is needed over the weekend is also attached. NSC has signed off on it, and Dick Kennedy is sending a copy to General Scowcroft under separate cover.

cc: Ken Cole  
Jerry Jones  
George Joulwan  
Jerry Warren

(Stein) NK/DG

July 19, 1974  
Third Draft

SIGNING STATEMENT: LEGAL SERVICES BILL

I am signing into law today H. R. 7824 creating an independent Legal Services Corporation.

As American society has grown increasingly complex, we have come to realize that without access to legal assistance the poor in America often stand defenseless in their struggle to lead a decent life. With a legal services program such as the one I am approving today, the law can function more effectively as a servant of the people. Access to the legal system means that more people will have a stake in preserving that system and in determining their rights through accepted judicial processes. Thus a sound legal services program helps to conserve faith in our institutions and adds to the stability of American life.

I recognize that many who support the concept of equality before the law have turned against the legal services program of the past because of abuses which in fact occurred, and others which were thought to have occurred.

These problems were in large part the result of inadequacies in the structure and management of legal service activities. For this reason, I vetoed a legal services bill that was presented to me in 1971 that failed to provide proper accountability and responsibility on the part of the corporation's board members. The Legal Services Corporation Act of 1974 remedies the weaknesses of the 1971 bill, however, and improves upon the present program by providing a number of safeguards assuring that the new program will genuinely serve the personal needs of poor persons and not become a vehicle for generalized political action.

This bill restricts the lobbying of legal service lawyers, limits their practice of law outside their regular employment, circumscribes political activities, and imposes tight restrictions on representation in criminal cases and litigation involving desegregation, abortion, draft avoidance, picketing, and other matters not germane to the purposes of this bill.

The sum which the Congress has authorized for legal services exceeds my budget request by \$18.5 million. I plan to spend no more than \$71.5 million which I have requested for legal services, and I

trust the Congress will join with me in this effort to avoid inflationary spending by not appropriating a sum in excess of my budget for this purpose.

With these safeguards, and with the guiding hand of the eleven-member bipartisan board of directors whom I will soon nominate, I am confident that the Legal Services Corporation Act of 1974 will stand as a milestone on the road to the availability of justice for all.

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July 19, 1974

MEMORANDUM TO: DAVE GERGEN

FROM: PAT BUCHANAN

Strongly recommend no signing statement -- this is hypocritical as hell, in my judgment; the President really does not believe it, principal beneficiaries of legal services are not the poor, but the leftist lawyers who gravitate to the program and use their base and salaries to work for political changes, through the judicial rather than the elective system. Secondly, why in God's name, working class and middle class people (many of whom can't afford a damn divorce lawyer themselves) should have to be footing the bill for lawyers for welfare types is beyond Buchanan. Further, in a time when the country has managed its economic affairs so dismally as to be running a 12 percent inflation, with no end in sight, what the hell this Republican Administration is doing institutionalizing federal legal services for a fraction of the population is as yet unexplained in this message. Sorry to bother you with this diatribe, Mr. Gergen, but I am sure this message will get a good quiet laugh among many familiar with this wonderful program.

Buchanan