

April 14, 2021

Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
2413 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Kay Granger
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
1026 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Matt Cartwright
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
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2102 Rayburn House Office Building
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Ranking Member Robert Aderholt
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Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
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Chairman Patrick Leahy
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
437 Russell Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Vice Chairman Richard Shelby
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Chairwoman Jeanne Shaheen
U.S. Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, & Related Agencies
506 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Ranking Member Jerry Moran
U.S. Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, & Related Agencies
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees:

As deans of law schools in the United States, we urge you to provide a significant increase in funding for the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) due to the heightened need for legal assistance during and in the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic. LSC has long received bipartisan support, and we hope you will continue to work together to ensure that LSC has the funding needed to perform its vital mission.

We lead a diverse array of law schools with a wide variety of institutional missions. Our personal views span the political spectrum. We come together today with a shared conviction that LSC funds are critically needed to provide access to justice in our communities.

LSC-supported legal services organizations help homeless veterans, victims of natural disasters, domestic violence survivors, low-income senior citizens and many other vulnerable populations. More than 53 million Americans qualified for legal assistance from LSC-funded programs prior to the pandemic, and even more will qualify now because of the sharp rise in unemployment and other dislocation over the last year. Yet the economic toll of COVID-19 has exacerbated the well-documented "justice gap" between the civil legal needs of low-income Americans and the resources available to meet those needs.

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 reduce the need for public spending in other areas.

As law school deans, we value the partnerships facilitated by LSC funds. Many of our schools operate clinics and externship programs in collaboration with organizations relying on LSC funds. Our students benefit from working alongside experienced attorneys dedicated to serving the public interest.

Fundamentally, we believe that funding for LSC is integral to the fair administration of justice and the rule of law. As the late Justice Antonin Scalia stated on the occasion of the organization's 40th anniversary, LSC "pursues the most fundamental of American ideals" for "without access to quality representation there is no justice."

We appreciate your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

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