

May 1, 2023

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair, U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

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

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairwoman, U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
2413 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman, U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
H-310, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Matt Cartwright
Ranking Member, U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members of the U.S. 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 address the pressing need for civil legal assistance throughout the country. We support the request of the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) for a significantly increased appropriation in Fiscal Year 2024.

We lead a diverse array of law schools with a variety of institutional objectives. Our personal views span the political spectrum. Despite our disparate backgrounds and political perspectives, we express unified support for giving LSC the resources it has requested to carry out its statutory mission.

Although LSC has enjoyed bipartisan support for more than four decades, the systems for providing legal services to low-income Americans remain persistently underfunded and well below the rate of inflation. Over 50 million Americans currently qualify for legal assistance from LSC-funded programs, yet fewer than 10% of those eligible were able to obtain representation to resolve legal disputes, according to LSC's 2022 study: "The Justice Gap: The Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Low-Income Americans." Hundreds of thousands of senior citizens facing foreclosure, veterans seeking benefits they are due, and victims of domestic abuse do not receive the legal representation they urgently need.

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, LSC funds obviate the need for public spending in other areas. Legal service organizations play a critical role in helping communities recover from natural disasters and the lingering economic fallout of the global pandemic.

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 who will continue to have a positive impact on their communities after graduation.

Fundamentally, we believe that funding for LSC is essential to the fair administration of justice and compelled by the rule of law. We teach our students that the ideal of "Equal Justice Under Law" depends on access to the justice system. Funding for the Legal Services Corporation makes these aspirations real. For these reasons, we appreciate your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

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Texas A&M University School of Law

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