March 23, 2017

Chairman Rodney P. Frelinghuysen
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
2306 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Thad Cochran
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Chairman John Culberson
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, & Related Agencies
2161 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Richard Shelby
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, & Related Agencies
304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Congressional Leaders:

As deans of law schools in the United States, we urge you to maintain funding for the Legal Services Corporation (LSC), the largest funder of civil legal aid in our nation. The LSC has long received bipartisan support, and we hope that you will continue to work together to ensure that the LSC has the funding it needs to perform its critical function.

We lead a diverse array of law schools – large and small, public and private, in college towns and big cities, in red states and blue states – that have a wide variety of institutional missions. Our personal views span the political spectrum. What brings us together today is a shared conviction that the loss of LSC funds would devastate efforts to provide access to essential legal services in our communities.

LSC-funded providers serve millions of low-income Americans who could not otherwise afford legal representation. These providers help people who live in households with annual incomes at or below 125% of the federal poverty guidelines, a category that includes almost one in five Americans. The cases involve some of the most difficult, life-changing circumstances a person can face. The most common LSC-funded matters include advocating for the needs of military families, protecting domestic violence victims, representing parties in guardianship proceedings, preventing foreclosures, and guarding the elderly against unscrupulous lenders.

LSC funding, even at current levels, leaves many people without any legal assistance. Though LSC funds helped nearly 1.9 million people in 2015, recent studies estimate that 80 percent of the civil legal needs of the eligible population are still not being met. From 2007 to 2016, funding per eligible person decreased from $7.54 to $5.85.

Research shows that civil legal aid is a wise public investment and actually saves taxpayer dollars. For example, by helping end cycles of domestic violence, making it possible for children to leave foster care more quickly, and reducing unnecessary evictions and unjust foreclosures, LSC funds reduce the need for public spending in other areas.

As law school deans, we see the impact of LSC funds, not just in direct service by legal aid organizations, but through the partnerships that the funds facilitate. Many of our schools operate clinics and externships that collaborate with organizations that rely on LSC funds. The funds have a positive ripple effect across our communities and into future generations of attorneys, as our students work alongside experienced attorneys dedicated to serving the less fortunate.
LSC has been a success story because it reflects a bipartisan affirmation of who we are as Americans. As the late Justice Antonin Scalia stated in his remarks celebrating the organization’s 40th anniversary, the 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,

Andrew Abrams
Charleston School of Law

Mark L. Adams
University of Idaho College of Law

Robert W. Adler
University of Utah S.J. Quinney College of Law

Gail B. Agrawal
The University of Iowa College of Law

Klint Alexander
University of Wyoming College of Law

Mark C. Alexander
Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law

Nicholas W. Allard
Brooklyn Law School

Vikram David Amar
University of Illinois College of Law

Jerry L. Anderson
Drake University Law School

Daniel F. Attridge
The Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law

Jennifer S. Bard
University of Cincinnati College of Law

Leonard M. Baynes
University of Houston Law Center
Deborah H. Bell
The University of Mississippi School of Law

Patricia W. Bennett
Mississippi College School of Law

Jessica Berg
Case Western Reserve University School of Law

Luke Bierman
Elon University School of Law

Mary Lu Bilek
CUNY School of Law

Craig M. Boise
Syracuse University College of Law

Kathleen M. Boozang
Seton Hall University Law School

Gregory W. Bowman
West Virginia University College of Law

Mark E. Brandon
The University of Alabama School of Law

David A. Brennen
University of Kentucky College of Law

Martin H. Brinkley
University of North Carolina School of Law

Katherine S. Broderick
University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law

Jennifer Gerarda Brown
Quinnipiac University School of Law

Jordan Budd
University of New Hampshire School of Law

Michael T. Cahill
Rutgers Law School
Davison M. Douglas  
William & Mary Law School

Susan Duncan  
University of Louisville Louis D. Brandeis School of Law

Allen K. Easley  
Western State College of Law

Angela Felecia Epps  
Florida A&M University College of Law

David L. Faigman  
University of California Hastings College of the Law

Ward Farnsworth  
University of Texas School of Law

Stephen C. Ferruolo  
University of San Diego School of Law

Daniel M. Filler  
Drexel University Thomas R. Kline School of Law

Lee Fisher  
Cleveland State University Cleveland-Marshall College of Law

Timothy Fisher  
University of Connecticut School of Law

Cynthia L. Fountaine  
Southern Illinois University School of Law

Jose Frontera  
Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico Law School

Lance Gable  
Wayne State University Law School

Thomas C. Galligan Jr.  
Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center

Alfredo Garcia  
St. Thomas University School of Law
James A. Gardner  
University at Buffalo School of Law

Jon M. Garon  
Nova Southeastern University Shepard Broad College of Law

Thomas Geu  
University of South Dakota Law School

Barbara Glesner Fines  
University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law

Risa L. Goluboff  
University of Virginia School of Law

Mark C. Gordon  
Mitchell Hamline School of Law

Eric J. Gouvin  
Western New England University School of Law

Thomas F. Guernsey  
Thomas Jefferson School of Law

Donald J. Guter  
South Texas College of Law Houston

Chris Guthrie  
Vanderbilt Law School

Andrew T. Guzman  
University of Southern California Gould School of Law

Daniel W. Hamilton  
UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law

Brant J. Hellwig  
Washington and Lee School of Law

Michael V. Hernandez  
Regent University School of Law

Danielle Holley-Walker  
Howard University School of Law
Gilbert Holmes
University of La Verne College of Law

James W. Houck
Penn State Law

Rachel M. Janutis
Capital University Law School

Garry W. Jenkins
University of Minnesota Law School

Christian A. Johnson
Widener University Commonwealth Law School

Jennifer Johnson
Lewis & Clark Law School

William P. Johnson
Saint Louis University School of Law

Michael J. Kaufman
Loyola University Chicago School of Law

Paul F. Kirgis
University of Montana Alexander Blewett III School of Law

Andrew R. Klein
Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law

Lisa A. Kloppenberg
Santa Clara University School of Law

Jane Korn
Gonzaga University School of Law

Harold J. Krent
IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law

Maureen Lally-Green
Duquesne University School of Law

Elena B. Langan
Concordia University School of Law
Don LeDuc
Western Michigan University Thomas M. Cooley Law School

Stacy L. Leeds
University of Arkansas School of Law

J. Rich Leonard
Campbell University Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law

Melanie Leslie
Yeshiva University Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law

Gillian Lester
Columbia Law School

Peter V. Letsou
The University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law

David F. Levi
Duke University School of Law

Andrea D. Lyon
Valparaiso University School of Law

M. Elizabeth Magill
Stanford Law School

Alfred D. Mathewson
The University of New Mexico School of Law

Stephen Mazza
University of Kansas School of Law

Paul McGreal
Creighton University School of Law

David D. Meyer
Tulane University Law School

Alan C. Michaels
The Ohio State University Michael E. Moritz College of Law

Marc Mihaly
Vermont Law School
Thomas J. Miles
The University of Chicago Law School

Martha Minow
Harvard Law School

Eric J. Mitnick
University of Massachusetts School of Law - Dartmouth

Jennifer L. Mnookin
UCLA School of Law

Richard Moberly
University of Nebraska College of Law

Michael Moffitt
University of Oregon School of Law

Rev. Lawrence W. Moore, S.J.
Loyola University New Orleans College of Law

Francis J. Mootz III
University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law

Trevor W. Morrison
New York University School of Law

Andrew Morriss
Texas A&M School of Law

Camille A. Nelson
American University Washington College of Law

Vivian I. Neptune
University of Puerto Rico School of Law

Nell Jessup Newton
Notre Dame Law School

Maureen A. O'Rourke
Boston University School of Law

Alicia Ouellette
Albany Law School
Sergio Pareja
The University of New Mexico School of Law

Austen L. Parrish
Indiana University Maurer School of Law

Jeremy Paul
Northeastern University School of Law

Eduardo M. Peñalver
Cornell Law School

Wendy C. Perdue
University of Richmond School of Law

Andrew M. Perlman
Suffolk University Law School

John Pierre
Southern University Law Center

Christopher M. Pietruszkiewicz
Stetson University College of Law

Lawrence Ponoroff
Michigan State University College of Law

Robert C. Post
Yale Law School

Susan Westerberg Prager
Southwestern law School

A. Gail Prudenti
Hofstra University Maurice A. Deane School of Law

Kathryn R.L. Rand
University of North Dakota School of Law

Margaret Raymond
University of Wisconsin Law School

Daniel B. Rodriguez
Northwestern Pritzker School of Law
Nancy Staudt  
Washington University School of Law

Andrew L. Strauss  
University of Dayton School of Law

Henry C. Strickland  
Samford University Cumberland School of Law

Douglas J. Sylvester  
Arizona State University Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law

Deanell Reece Tacha  
Pepperdine School of Law

Kellye Y. Testy  
University of Washington School of Law

Donald B. Tobin  
University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law

John Trasviña  
University of San Francisco Law School

William Treanor  
Georgetown University Law Center

Rachel A. Van Cleave  
Golden Gate University School of Law

Robert K. Vischer  
University of St. Thomas School of Law

Gary R. Wade  
Lincoln Memorial University Duncan School of Law

Michael Waterstone  
Loyola Law School, Los Angeles

Ronald Weich  
University of Baltimore School of Law

Mark D. West  
University of Michigan Law School
Patricia D. White
University of Miami School of Law

Penny L. Willrich
Arizona Summit Law School

Melanie D. Wilson
The University of Tennessee College of Law

David Yassky
Pace University Elisabeth Haub School of Law

Michael J. Yelnosky
Roger Williams University School of Law

_Institutional affiliations are listed for identification purposes only._