

ATTACHMENT A

(Form of joint letter of support for the Legal Services Corporation approved by the Board of Trustees on April 8, 2011)

Dear Representatives and Senators:

As leaders of the fifty state bars, the territorial bar associations, local bar associations, the national bars of color, and the American Bar Association, we respectfully request that Congress maintain level funding of \$420 million for the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2011, and that Congress grant the Administration's request to fund LSC at \$450 million for Fiscal Year 2012.

LSC is the single largest provider of civil legal aid in the nation, distributing 95% of its federal appropriation to 136 legal aid programs, with over 900 offices, nationwide; at least one LSC grantee is present in each of the fifty states. Those benefiting from LSC-funded programs are among the most vulnerable Americans, including veterans returning from combat, domestic violence victims, those coping with the after-effects of natural disasters, families involved in child custody disputes, people with disabilities, and individuals undergoing foreclosures or other housing issues. Due to economic conditions, the number of people who qualify for legal services is at an all-time high; nearly 57 million Americans, including 19 million children, now are eligible for civil legal assistance.

With the current recession, adequate funding for LSC is more critical than ever. Already, one in two eligible clients seeking assistance from an LSC-funded legal aid program is turned away due to lack of resources. Other sources of funding for legal assistance programs have also diminished; legal aid revenue from Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts has decreased due to low interest rates, and state and private contributors are also struggling with budget issues in the current economic climate. Furthermore, pro bono efforts would diminish without robust LSC funding; LSC provides the framework and infrastructure for pro bono efforts and needs sufficient resources to continue.

The need for legal aid services already far exceeds the funding provided to LSC, and the number of people in poverty needing LSC help continues to grow. Maintaining no less than the current level of \$420 million for FY11 and supporting LSC at \$450 million for FY12 are vital to ensuring equal justice for all Americans regardless of their economic status.

Thank you very much for your consideration and your continued support of the Legal Services Corporation.

Sincerely,