

Senate Appropriations Subcommittee Proposes 2 Percent Cut to LSC Funding

Washington, DC—The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies today approved \$396 million in Fiscal Year 2012 funding for the Legal Services Corporation (LSC), a reduction of \$8 million from the current level.

The Senate Appropriations Committee is scheduled to take up the Fiscal Year 2012 funding bill on September 15. Earlier this year, the House Appropriations Committee proposed cutting LSC funding by 26 percent in Fiscal Year 2012, to \$300 million.

“We seem caught in a perfect storm,” LSC Board Chairman John G. Levi said. “The Congress faces a tough budget environment. The poverty population is growing. Requests from low-income Americans for civil legal assistance are increasing. Other sources of legal aid funding are declining. Legal aid offices are stretched thin and laying off attorneys and staff because of funding shortfalls.”

Last year, the 136 nonprofit legal aid programs that receive LSC grants reported significant increases in cases involving foreclosure, unemployment, landlord-tenant disputes, domestic violence and other civil legal matters related to the slow economic recovery. This week, new Census Bureau statistics showed that nearly one in five Americans qualifies for LSC-funded assistance, or more than 60 million people.

“I am very concerned that reductions in LSC funding will further erode access to justice for low-income citizens, especially those whose safety and security might be at risk. I look forward to working with the House and the Senate on how we can fulfill our nation’s promise of equal justice for all,” Chairman Levi said.

Established in 1974, LSC operates as an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation to promote equal access to justice and to ensure the provision of high-quality civil

legal assistance to low-income Americans. About 95 percent of LSC funding is for field grants for local nonprofit civil legal aid programs across the nation.

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