

Fiscal Year 2011 Bill Would Cut Legal Aid by \$15.8 Million

Washington, DC—The Fiscal Year 2011 budget for the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) would be cut by \$15.8 million, reducing funds for civil legal assistance to low-income Americans, according to legislation announced today.

LSC received \$420 million in funding for Fiscal Year 2010, and the funding bill for 2011 would provide \$404.2 million, a reduction of 3.8 percent. The legislation, the result of a negotiated agreement between the Congress and the White House to avoid a government shutdown, is scheduled for votes in the House and Senate this week.

“Every dollar provided for civil legal assistance helps low-income individuals gain access to our justice system. We are grateful that funding cuts will not be as deep as initially proposed, and we look forward to working with the Congress on Fiscal Year 2012 funding to provide even greater access to justice for the growing number of low-income Americans in need of civil legal assistance,” LSC Board Chairman John G. Levi said.

The funding reduction would affect the grants that LSC distributes to 136 independent nonprofit legal aid programs across the nation, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories. Last year, these programs closed nearly 1 million cases, which affected 2.3 million people. The cases involve domestic violence, foreclosures, landlord-tenant disputes, bankruptcy, consumer issues and other civil legal matters.

Established in 1974, LSC is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation that promotes equal access to justice and funds high-quality civil legal assistance to low-income individuals and families. LSC-funded programs provide legal services to persons at or below 125 percent of the federal poverty guideline. LSC estimates that more than 63 million Americans—including 22 million children—qualify for civil legal assistance from LSC-funded programs.

Last updated on December 12, 2011.

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