

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 16, 2005

The Honorable Frank Wolf  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Science, State,  
Justice and Commerce  
H-309, the Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Alan B. Mollohan  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Science, State,  
Justice and Commerce  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Wolf and Ranking Member Mollohan:

We write in strong support of the request by the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) Board of Directors for \$363,809,000 in the FY06 Science, State, Justice, Commerce and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. This amount represents a necessary increase of \$11,009,000 over the Board's FY05 request and a \$33,005,295 increase over the final FY05 appropriation.

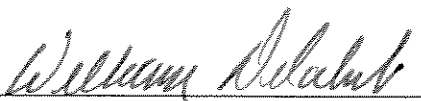
In its budget submission to Congress, the bipartisan LSC Board stated that the request "takes into account the budgetary pressures facing the federal government, [but] represents the minimum amount necessary for LSC to effectively undertake its mission of delivering quality civil legal assistance to eligible low-income Americans."

Legal services are in greater demand than ever, but LSC has endured serious reductions in federal funding over the last decade. In 1996, Congress reduced LSC's budget by 30%, from \$415 million to \$278 million, which forced the closing of more than 100 legal aid offices across the nation. Yet from 1990 to 2000, the number of people living in poverty in the United States increased by 5.7%, and today more than 43 million Americans are eligible for federally funded legal assistance. While LSC's appropriation was essentially the same between 2002 and 2005, total inflation increased by 7.4%. As a result, tens of thousands of eligible persons with significant legal problems are turned away because of the lack of resources for local programs.

Funds provided by LSC are indispensable to the 140 local programs serving every county and Congressional district in the country. Local clients include the working poor, veterans, family farmers, people with disabilities and low-income military families. Their legal problems involve family relationships, domestic violence, health, employment, housing and many other basic needs. The failure to resolve these problems causes even greater hardship for them and often leads to their reliance on other government programs.

Large numbers of Americans do not have access to the legal representation they need. Without this necessary increase in federal funding, many more will be denied fair representation. We urge you to fund the LSC at \$363,809,000 to help meet this urgent need.

Sincerely,



WILLIAM D. DELAHUNT  
Member of Congress



JIM RAMSTAD  
Member of Congress