



February 23, 2011

Senator Richard Durbin
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-1304

Dear Senator Durbin:

On behalf of The Chicago Bar Association and the Illinois State Bar Association and our thousands of members throughout the State, we urge you to support level funding for the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) for the remainder of fiscal year 2011.

Three Illinois organizations, Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation, Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago and Prairie State Legal Services, collectively receive more than \$13.7 million in LSC funding. LSC funding enables these organizations to provide essential legal assistance to thousands of people in Illinois, including military families and veterans, domestic violence victims, the growing number of people facing foreclosures, and many others who depend on civil legal services for their safety and independence.

As a result of current economic conditions, a record 57 million Americans are now eligible for LSC services, while at the same time other key sources of funding for legal aid such as state and local government and the IOLTA program are declining or under severe stress. A reduction in LSC funding would be catastrophic to the people of Illinois at a time when more of your constituents than ever before are in need of these services.

We recognize the very real fiscal challenges facing the federal government right now, but we cannot sacrifice our core responsibilities as a nation. Lawyers in Illinois are doing their part, providing hundreds of thousands of hours of pro bono service and donating millions of dollars to legal aid organizations. We will continue to push to do more, but we can't do it without the federal government doing its share to uphold our nation's fundamental principle of equal justice for all.

Please support keeping LSC at its current funding levels. It is a very cost-effective investment in families and communities throughout the country, and it is extremely important in this time of heightened need. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark Hassakis
President, The Illinois State Bar Association

Terri L. Mascherin
President, The Chicago Bar Association