March 6, 2017

Dear Leaders of the Washington State Legislature:

We are writing on behalf of 23 of the largest law firms in Washington State to urge you to increase funding for civil legal aid by $12.012 million for the fiscal year 2017-19 biennium. This would fully fund Phase I of the Office of Civil Legal Aid’s Civil Justice Reinvestment Plan.

If our legal system does not work for all, it does not work. Access to the legal system is important to all Washingtonians, and essential to the fair administration of justice. For that reason, the...
law firms that join in this letter have consistently made significant investments in expanding free legal services in Washington. In 2016, our firms collectively donated roughly 64,000 hours of volunteer legal work worth nearly $27 million, and directly contributed about $800,000 to legal service organizations. These numbers represent just a fraction of the contributions made by law firms and lawyers in the state.

Unfortunately, the 2015 Civil Legal Needs Study demonstrates that even with these significant private contributions, Washington is failing at making justice accessible to everyone. The study found:

- More than 70% of low-income households in Washington experience at least one important civil legal problem each year.
- One unresolved legal problem frequently leads to another, related legal challenge, with low-income households facing an average of nine legal problems during the space of a year.
- More than 76% of the time, low-income households do not receive any legal assistance at all.

This shortfall in Washington’s civil legal aid services is unacceptable. It not only undermines our system of justice, but also contributes to a variety of larger societal problems. The most common legal issues faced by low-income Washingtonians include accessing affordable health care, finding and keeping employment, using financial services, avoiding consumer exploitation, keeping their families safe from violence and abuse, securing stable housing, and applying for government assistance. These legal challenges implicate many pressing public issues, and effectively addressing these legal needs is an essential element of developing broader solutions to issues such as homelessness, affordable health care, and unemployment.

Unsurprisingly, nearly two-thirds of low-income people in Washington have little or no confidence in the capacity of our justice system to help them address these crucial legal challenges. Confidence in our legal system is essential to its continuing credibility and effectiveness.

We must, and can, do better. As representatives of the legal community, we are dedicated to continuing to explore avenues to close this significant gap in services. But volunteer hours and charitable contributions alone cannot come close to meeting the growing demand for legal aid in our state. We therefore join many of the largest companies in Washington in their request, reflected in the enclosed letter, for you to take action this session to fully fund the Civil Justice Reinvestment Plan submitted by the Office of Civil Legal Aid.

By committing to this funding, you will join us in affirming the fundamental principle that our state justice system must be open to all—not just those who can afford it.
Sincerely,

Matt B. Hanna  
*Managing Partner*  
*Cairncross & Hempelmann PS*

Robert Blackstone  
*Partner-in-Charge, Seattle*  
*Davis Wright Tremaine LLP*

Steve Yentzer  
*Managing Partner, Seattle*  
*DLA Piper*

Ken Cutler  
*Managing Partner*  
*Dorsey & Whitney LLP*

Kate Fritz  
*Managing Partner*  
*Fenwick & West LLP*

Jeffrey G. Frank  
*Managing Partner, Seattle*  
*John Nelson  
*Managing Partner, Spokane*  
*Foster Pepper PLLC*

Greg Duff  
*Chair*  
*Garvey Schubert Barer*

Warren E. Martin  
*Managing Partner*  
*Gordon Thomas Honeywell*

Scott E. Collins  
*Managing Partner*  
*Helsell Fetterman LLP*

Gary M. Fallon  
*President*  
*Hillis Clark Martin & Peterson PS*

David J. Lawyer  
*President*  
*Inslee Best Dozie & Ryder PS*

Pallavi Mehta Wahi  
*Administrative Partner, Seattle*  
*K&L Gates LLP*

Bruce Larson  
*President*  
*Karr Tuttle Campbell*

Lynn Lincoln Sarko  
*Managing Partner*  
*Keller Rohrback LLP*

Charles Riley  
*President*  
*Lane Powell PC*

Steve Miller  
*Partner-in-Charge, Seattle*  
*Miller Nash Graham & Dunn LLP*

Fred Rivera  
*Managing Partner, Seattle*  
*Perkins Coie LLP*

Joseph Shickich  
*President and CEO*  
*Riddell Williams PS*
Enclosure

cc: House Appropriations Committee Members
    House Judiciary Committee Members
    Senate Ways and Means Committee Members
    Senate Law and Justice Committee Members
March 22, 2017

Sent via Email

Dear Leaders of the Washington State Legislature:

We are partners of some of the largest law firms in Central Washington, writing to urge you to increase funding for civil legal aid by $12.012 million for the fiscal year 2017-19 biennium. This would fully fund Phase I of the Civil Justice Reinvestment Plan submitted by the Office of Civil Legal Aid.
If our legal system does not work for all of us, it does not work. Access to the legal system is important to all Washingtonians, and essential to the fair administration of justice.

Unfortunately, the 2015 Civil Legal Needs Study demonstrates that Washington is failing at making justice accessible to everyone. The study found that:

- More than 70% of low-income households in Washington experience at least one important civil legal problem each year.
- One unresolved legal problem frequently leads to another, related legal challenge, with low-income households reporting an average of nine legal problems each.
- More than 76% of the time, low-income households do not receive any legal assistance with these challenges.

This shortfall in Washington’s civil legal aid services is unacceptable. It not only undermines our system of justice, but also contributes to a variety of larger societal problems. The legal challenges faced by low-income Washingtonians implicate many pressing public issues, and effectively addressing them is an essential element of broader solutions. For example, the most common legal problems currently faced by low-income Washingtonians relate to their ability to access affordable health care, find and keep employment, use financial services free of consumer exploitation, keep their families safe from violence and abuse, secure stable housing, and apply for government assistance.

Unsurprisingly, nearly two-thirds of low-income people in Washington have little or no confidence in the capacity of our justice system to help them address these crucial legal challenges. And confidence in our legal system is essential to its continuing credibility and effectiveness.

We must do better. As representatives of the legal community, we are dedicated to solving this problem. We therefore join many others in Washington in their request for you to take action this session to fully fund the Civil Justice Reinvestment Plan submitted by the Office of Civil Legal Aid.

By committing to this funding, you will join us in affirming the fundamental principle that our state justice system must be open to all—not just those who can afford it.

Sincerely,

Ellen Jackson and Dustin Yeager  
Associate and Shareholder  
Stokes Lawrence Velikanje Moore & Shore (Yakima)

Larry Martin  
Managing Partner  
Halverson | Northwest Law Group, P.C.  
(Yakima and Sunnyside)
Shawn Murphy  
*Partner*  
Thorner, Kennedy & Gano P.S. (Yakima)

Bryan Smith  
*Partner*  
Tamaki Law (Yakima)

Russell J. Speidel  
*Partner*  
Speidel Bentsen, LLP (Wenatchee)

Jeanie R. Tolcacher  
*Shareholder*  
Lyon Weigand & Gustafson, PS (Yakima)

cc:  
House Appropriations Committee Members  
House Judiciary Committee Members  
Senate Ways and Means Committee Members  
Senate Law and Justice Committee Members  
Rep. David Taylor  
Rep. Bruce Chandler  
Sen. Jim Honeyford  
Rep. Matt Manweller  
Rep. Tom Dent  
Sen. Judy Warnick  
Rep. Mike Steele  
Rep. Cary Condotta  
Sen. Brad Hawkins  
Rep. Gina McCabe  
Rep. Norm Johnson  
Sen. Curtis King
Sent via Email

March 22, 2017

Dear Leaders of the Washington State Legislature:

We are partners of some of the largest law firms in Vancouver and southwestern Washington, writing to urge you to increase funding for civil legal aid by $12.012 million for the fiscal year 2017-19 biennium. This would fully fund Phase I of the Civil Justice Reinvestment Plan submitted by the Office of Civil Legal Aid.
If our legal system does not work for all of us, it does not work. Access to the legal system is important to all Washingtonians, and essential to the fair administration of justice.

Unfortunately, the 2015 Civil Legal Needs Study demonstrates that Washington is failing at making justice accessible to everyone. The study found that:

- More than 70% of low-income households in Washington experience at least one important civil legal problem each year.

- One unresolved legal problem frequently leads to another, related legal challenge, with low-income households reporting an average of nine legal problems each.

- More than 76% of the time, low-income households do not receive any legal assistance with these challenges.

This shortfall in Washington’s civil legal aid services is unacceptable. It not only undermines our system of justice, but also contributes to a variety of larger societal problems. The legal challenges faced by low-income Washingtonians implicate many pressing public issues, and effectively addressing them is an essential element of broader solutions. For example, the most common legal problems currently faced by low-income Washingtonians relate to their ability to access affordable health care, find and keep employment, use financial services free of consumer exploitation, keep their families safe from violence and abuse, secure stable housing, and apply for government assistance.

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Sincerely,

Loren Etengoff  
Owner  
The Law Offices of Loren Scott Etengoff  
Mila Boyd  
Of Counsel  
Wheeler Montgomery & Boyd, PLLC
cc:  House Appropriations Committee Members  
House Judiciary Committee Members  
Senate Ways and Means Committee Members  
Senate Law and Justice Committee Members  
Rep. Monica Jurado Stonier  
Rep. Sharon Wylie  
Sen. Annette Cleveland  
Rep. Paul Harris  
Rep. Vicki Kraft  
Sen. Lynda Wilson  
Rep. Liz Pike  
Rep. Brandon Vick  
Sen. Ann Rivers  
Rep. Gina McCabe  
Rep. Norm Johnson  
Sen. Curtis King
April 5, 2017

Sent via Email

Rep. Frank Chopp, Speaker
Rep. Pat Sullivan, Majority Leader
Rep. Dan Kristiansen, Minority Leader
Rep. Joel Kretz, Deputy Minority Leader
Rep. Tina Orwall, Speaker Pro Tempore
Rep. Eric Pettigrew, Majority Caucus Chair
Rep. Gael Tarleton, Majority Floor Leader
Rep. J.T. Wilcox, Minority Floor Leader
Rep. Matt Shea, Minority Caucus Chair
Rep. Timm Ormsby, Appropriations Committee Chair
Rep. Bruce Chandler, Appropriations Ranking Minority Member
Rep. Laurie Jinkins, Judiciary Committee Chair
Rep. Jay Rodne, Judiciary Committee, Ranking Minority Member
Sen. Mark Schoesler, Majority Leader
Sen. Sharon Nelson, Democratic Leader
Sen. Tim Sheldon, President Pro Tempore
Sen. Sharon Brown, Deputy Leader
Sen. Andy Billig, Deputy Minority Leader
Sen. Joe Fain, Minority Floor Leader
Sen. Marko Liias, Democratic Floor Leader
Sen. Randi Becker, Majority Caucus Chair
Sen. John McCoy, Democratic Caucus Chair
Sen. Mike Padden, Law and Justice Committee Chair
Sen. Jamie Pedersen, Law and Justice Ranking Minority Member
Sen. John Braun, Ways and Means Committee Chair
Sen. Kevin Ranker, Ways and Means Ranking Minority Member

Legislative Building
416 Sid Snyder Ave., SW
Olympia, Washington 98501

Re: Civil Legal Aid Funding

Dear Members of the Washington State Legislature:

We are partners of some of the largest law firms in Bellingham and northern Washington, writing to urge you to increase funding for civil legal aid by $12.012 million for the fiscal year 2017-19 biennium. This would fully fund Phase I of the Civil Justice Reinvestment Plan submitted by the Office of Civil Legal Aid.
If our legal system does not work for all of us, it does not work. Access to the legal system is important to all Washingtonians, and essential to the fair administration of justice.

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We must do better. As representatives of the legal community, we are dedicated to solving this problem. We therefore join many others in Washington in their request for you to take action this session to fully fund the Civil Justice Reinvestment Plan submitted by the Office of Civil Legal Aid.

By committing to this funding, you will join us in affirming the fundamental principle that our state justice system must be open to all—not just those who can afford it.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Barron
Partner
Barron | Smith | Daugert, PLLC
(Bellingham)
Jane Boman
Whatcom County Public Defender

James E. Britain
Partner
Britain | Krell, PLLC (Bellingham)

Michael P. Brodsky
Owner
Michael P. Brodsky, Attorney at Law (Bellingham)

Margaret Delp
Owner
Margaret Delp Law Office (Langley)

Rajeev Majumdar
Partner
North Whatcom Law (Blaine)

Karen Phillips
Partner
Coppinger Carter, P.S. (Bellingham)

Kip Wayerski
Partner
Wayerski Zmolek (Bellingham)

Dominique Zervas
Owner
Zervas Law, P.S. (Bellingham)

cc: House Appropriations Committee Members
House Judiciary Committee Members
Senate Ways and Means Committee Members
Senate Law and Justice Committee Members
Rep. Luanne Van Werven
Rep. Vincent Buys
Sen. Doug Ericksen
Rep. Kristine Lytton
Rep. Jeff Morris
Sen. Kevin Ranker
Rep. Norma Smith
Rep. Dave Hayes
Sen. Barbara Bailey
Rep. Dan Kristiansen
Rep. John Koster
Sen. Kirk Pearson