

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 10, 2018

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Moran and Ranking Member Shaheen:

We write asking you to include robust funding for the Legal Services Corporation ("LSC") in the Fiscal Year 2019 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

The FY 2018 Consolidated Appropriation provided LSC with \$410 million. In a difficult budget environment, this was a critical increase of \$25 million over FY 2017. We are grateful for your support for this important program.

The need for civil legal aid is greater now than ever. Over 58 million Americans, or nearly 19% of the U.S. population, currently qualify for legal assistance from LSC-funded programs. Eligible constituents span every demographic and live in rural, suburban, and urban areas. In 2017, LSC released a new study, "The Justice Gap: Measuring the Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Low-Income Americans," that showed that 86% of the civil legal problems of low-income Americans received inadequate or no legal help in the past year. That means that hundreds of thousands of veterans, elderly victims of foreclosure, and women and children desperate to escape domestic violence are not getting the assistance they desperately need.

LSC funding is essential to rural communities. Federal funding allows access to the courts and justice to rural populations who in most cases would not have access to a lawyer without federal funding. For many states with large rural areas, funding from LSC represents the majority of their funding. Nearly 80% of LSC's funding is awarded to local programs with a service area that includes a rural population. Without LSC funding, these populations would not receive assistance.

Recent research shows that civil legal aid is a good investment of taxpayer dollars, as it reduces clients' reliance on other types of governmental aid and enhances their ability to participate in the marketplace. Several state studies show that investment in civil legal aid stimulates significant economic benefits for communities, saving millions in emergency shelter costs, health care, foster care and law enforcement.

Further, legal aid programs have been critical in providing legal assistance to low-income residents impacted by natural disasters. LSC programs help disaster victims obtain FEMA and other government disaster-related benefits, assist with life, medical and property insurance

claims, replace wills and other important legal documents, and provide counsel on mortgage-foreclosure and other housing matters.

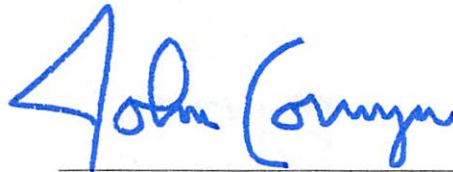
Legal services are essential. Therefore, we request that the Subcommittee robustly fund the LSC in Fiscal Year 2019 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. Without increases in federal funding, many more of our most vulnerable citizens will be denied critical legal assistance.

Sincerely,



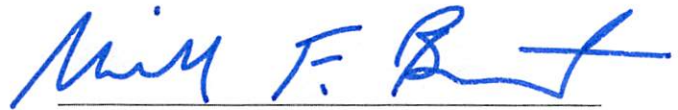
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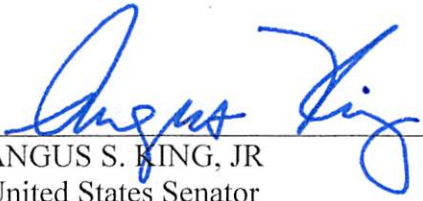
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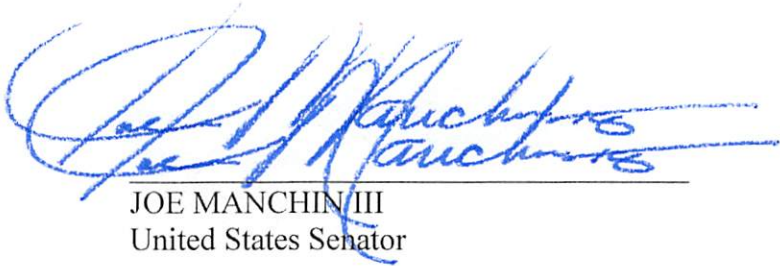
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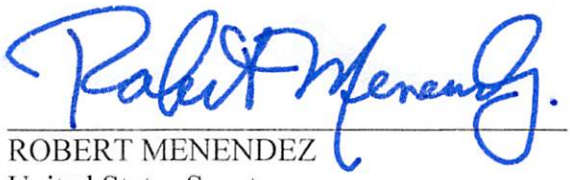
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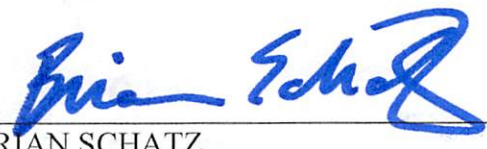
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