



Talking Points: Federal Funding for the Legal Services Corporation

Justice for all

Civil legal aid has long enjoyed broad bipartisan support for a reason: Americans believe in justice for all, not just for those who can afford it.

LSC assures fairness for all in the justice system, regardless of how much money you have. It provides access to legal help for people to protect their livelihoods, their health, and their families.

When it's your health, home, or family on the line, you deserve legal protection so you have a fair shot. That's why LSC is so vital.

Who benefits

Millions of Americans cannot afford the legal help they need when facing life-changing situations, such as domestic violence, unlawful eviction, or the wrongful denial of benefits for veterans or people with disabilities.

Civil legal aid helps Americans across the country: veterans denied rightfully earned benefits, families fighting wrongful evictions, women trapped in abusive relationships, and parents seeking custody of their children.

The difference civil legal aid makes: evictions

For many families, civil legal aid is the difference between keeping their homes or being forced out onto the street.

Supporting Evidence: [One recent report](#) showed that three of five tenants had valid legal reasons to fight eviction, but most lost their homes because they couldn't afford legal help and didn't understand their legal rights.

The difference civil legal aid makes: domestic violence

Civil legal aid reduces domestic violence by helping victims achieve independence and escape violent situations.

Supporting Evidence: [One study showed](#) legal help can reduce domestic violence by about 20 percent. [Another showed](#) that legal help can be even more effective than shelters or counseling in stopping domestic violence.

Forgotten Americans

President Trump made a commitment to help "forgotten" Americans struggling to get ahead. Trump and Congress must reject these proposals, which would do just the opposite.

Gutting civil legal aid would devastate families and vulnerable people across the U.S.



It would hit states with large rural areas hard, where families already struggle to find the legal help they need.

Supporting Evidence: [Data from the Justice Index](#) show that the 10 states ranking lowest in access to help from a civil legal aid attorney are South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, Idaho, Colorado, Texas, Georgia, Indiana, Arkansas, and Montana.

A good investment

Civil legal aid makes fiscal sense and is a good investment.

Everybody benefits when an American remains housed. Housing stabilizes families and enables them to remain self-sufficient, ultimately saving taxpayers money. The public costs of sheltering families that become homeless are significant, as are the increased costs of providing public assistance, transitional housing, and health care for families in crisis.

Helping survivors of domestic violence reduces shelter costs. Early legal interventions prevent more serious problems down the road. It's like preventative health care. When legal aid is able to address problems early, it prevents problems from escalating.

Civil legal aid provided by LSC helps Americans of all backgrounds and ages—children, veterans, seniors, people with disabilities, and victims of domestic violence—saving taxpayers millions of dollars while ensuring justice for all.

Funding for LSC amounts to a miniscule slice of the federal budget—roughly one-hundredth of one percent. Washington would be delivering a devastating blow to American families without any meaningful impact on the budget.

This modest investment in LSC is an essential building block for assuring fairness in the justice system. Private attorneys who volunteer thousands of hours of pro bono work in their communities depend on LSC funded civil legal aid organizations to provide them with training and connect them with clients who need their help. By leveraging pro bono assistance from private attorneys, LSC funded programs do “more with less.”

In gutting civil legal aid, members of Congress would be turning their backs on their own constituents and causing unnecessary suffering.

Supporting Evidence: Letter from 150 Major Law Firms in support of LSC

<http://www.nationallawjournal.com/image/nlj/LegalServicesLetter.pdf>

Letter from the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators in support of LSC

<https://lsc-live.app.box.com/s/fsv8qtmymis1zasrnj9zkt3ohhusosmu2>