KENTUCKY BAR ASSOCIATION BOARD OF GOVERNORS DEEPLY TROUBLED BY PROPOSED ELIMINATION OF FUNDING FOR THE LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

FRANKFORT, Ky. -- Last week President Donald J. Trump submitted his proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2018, which contained the elimination of 19 programs, including funding for the Legal Services Corporation (LSC). LSC is the single largest funder of civil legal aid for low-income Americans in the nation. Established in 1974, LSC operates as an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation that promotes equal access to justice and provides grants for high-quality civil legal assistance to low-income Americans. LSC distributes more than 90 percent of its total funding to 133 independent nonprofit legal aid programs with more than 800 offices.

The Kentucky Bar Association Board of Governors is deeply concerned about this proposed elimination and its effect on the citizens of the Kentucky. Funding for LSC helps secure access to justice for low-income persons in many areas of Kentucky, as well as assistance for veterans, seniors, disaster survivors, women and children. The statewide average of LSC funding as a percentage of total program budget is 38 percent.

Elimination of funding to the LSC offices in Kentucky, which includes Appalachian Research and Defense Fund of Kentucky, Kentucky Legal Aid, Legal Aid of the Bluegrass and the Legal Aid Society, would have devastating consequences. Without LSC, and its funding to the Kentucky legal aid offices, our citizens’ access to justice would be severely impacted, ensuring that many of them would not receive representation for their legal needs.

The Kentucky Bar Association, along with numerous local and state bar associations across the country, recognize the severity of this proposed budget cut and urge that the funding be reinstated to ensure access to justice for everyone.

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