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The Honorable David R. Obey
House Appropriations Committee
2314 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
House Appropriations Committee
2112 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Thurgood Marshall Legal Educational Opportunity Program FY 2007

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Republican Lewis:

On behalf of the American Bar Association, I write in support of continued funding for the Thurgood Marshall Legal Educational Opportunity Program ("Marshall Program") through the remainder of FY2007. Currently the Marshall Program is funded under P.L. 109-383 at \$2.976 million, a level that would continue for the remainder of FY 2007 under the anticipated Continuing Resolution. Even though this represents only a fraction of the \$5 million authorized, this level of funding would at least prevent disruption of core program activities.

Authorized under the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, and administered by the Council on Legal Education Opportunity (CLEO), the Marshall Program provides disadvantaged but qualified students with educational counseling, technical assistance, and need-based financial aid to enable them to succeed in law school. Today, the Marshall Program helps more than 800 students in 40 states, and over the past eight years it has helped nearly 8,000 minority and non-minority students enter the legal profession.

Funding for the Marshall Program is particularly essential at this time because minority enrollment in law school is in decline and the cost of law school has placed the opportunity out of reach for so many. Accordingly, we believe that the Marshall Program remains vital to maintaining public confidence in the justice system by, among other things, promoting a legal profession that reflects the diversity of the public it serves.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



Robert D. Evans

cc: Members of the House Committee on Appropriations