

Carolyn B. Lamm
President

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

321 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60654-7598
(312) 988-5109
Fax: (312) 988-5100
E-mail: abapresident@abanet.org

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The Honorable Alan B. Mollohan
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
H-309, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank R. Wolf
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: FY 2011 Funding for the Legal Services Corporation

Dear Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Wolf:

On behalf of the American Bar Association (ABA), which has nearly 400,000 members nationwide, I thank you both for your long-standing commitment to the principal of equal access to the justice system for all Americans.

Thanks to your efforts and strong bipartisan support, the Subcommittee mark for the FY 2011 Commerce, Justice Science appropriations bill includes \$440 million for the Legal Services Corporation. This much-needed \$20 million increase will help thousands of the most vulnerable Americans access critical legal assistance in matters where their home, their safety and their independence are at stake. We also want to commend the Subcommittee's bipartisan agreement that, beginning last year, lifted the restriction on the collection of statutorily authorized attorneys' fees.

This year the Subcommittee mark also lifts the restriction that prevents federally funded legal aid programs from filing class actions on behalf of multiple clients aggrieved by the same person or entity. The ABA supports and firmly agrees that lifting this restriction will allow grantees to more efficiently address systemic issues such as predatory lending or wrongful eviction. The ABA strongly believes that class actions should be available to low-income victims of unscrupulous practices.

Thank you again for your continued support for legal services for the poor. We look forward to working with you to increase access to justice for all.

Sincerely,



Carolyn B. Lamm

cc: Members, House CJS Appropriations Subcommittee