



Ohio Judicial Conference

The Voice of Ohio Judges

April 19, 2017

Senator Rob Portman
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Funding for Legal Services Corporation

Dear Senator Portman,

The Ohio Judicial Conference is a statutory entity in Ohio whose membership includes all 722 Ohio judges. The Conference exists “for the purpose of studying the coordination of the work of the several courts of Ohio, the encouragement of uniformity in the application of the law, rules, and practice throughout the state and within each division of the courts as an integral part of the judicial system of the state; to promote an exchange of experience and suggestions respecting the operation of the judicial system; and in general to consider the business and problems pertaining to the administration of justice and to make recommendations for its improvement.”

We are greatly concerned with the budget proposal to eliminate funding for the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) and the impact that the proposal will have on the fair and impartial administration of justice in Ohio.

It is one of, if not the primary, purpose of government to provide a forum for the fair and just resolution of complaints between citizens and between the citizens and the government on behalf of all the people. Should the people lose confidence in the courts to fairly resolve their complaints, then civility shall cease to exist and chaos will reign. The courts, therefore, serve all the people as a bulwark for peace and cannot be perceived to be a service only to those who file claims. Nor should it be, in practice, a service provided only to those who can afford to file claims.

Ohio judges place great value on the service provided by legal aid attorneys throughout our state. Legal Service Corporation-funded legal aid programs currently serve more than 100,000 Ohioans annually. Those served include seniors, veterans, victims of domestic violence, and children, some of the most vulnerable members of our society. Not only are these services of great value to those who receive representation and legal advice, they are of great value to Ohio courts that benefit by providing better access to justice.

The late Justice Antonin Scalia said that “Equality, equal treatment is perhaps the most fundamental element of justice. So, this organization (LSC) pursues the most fundamental of American ideals and it pursues equal justice in those areas of life most important to the lives of our citizens.” We urge you to fight for continued funding for the Legal Services Corporation.

Respectfully,

Paul E. Pfeifer
Executive Director

OHIO JUDICIAL CONFERENCE

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