

OHIO COMMON PLEAS JUDGES ASSOCIATION

David T. Matia, President

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Judge Linda J. Jennings, President Elect

April 27, 2017

U.S. Senator Robert Portman
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown
801 West Superior Avenue, Suite 1400
Cleveland, OH 44113

Re: Funding for Legal Services Corporation

Dear Senator Portman and Senator Brown:

The Ohio Common Pleas Judges Association has great concerns about the proposed defunding of the Legal Services Corporation (LSC). On behalf of our members, we recommend that funding for LSC be increased as opposed to eliminated.

Our justice system operates under its own moral authority. It lacks power of the purse or a standing army to enforce its orders. Its power to ensure justice results solely from its moral authority. The moral authority of the justice system is based upon the trust parties place in it that their matters will be resolved fairly and justly. Access to counsel helps guarantee that parties to every matter feel their cases' resolve appropriately and fairly.

Legal Services Corporation funded Legal Aid programs currently serve more than 100,000 Ohioans annually. Without Legal Services Corporation funding, the Courts would have over 100,000 more self-represented participants or worse, it would have significant numbers of Ohioans taking civil matters into their own hands.

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As a percentage of the federal budget, Legal Services Corporation funding is miniscule. However, its impact on a fair and just society is immense. Cutting funding to the Legal Service's Corporation would be akin to stabbing the heart of organized society.

Defunding the LSC is a grave mistake and a step closer to a lawless society. The OCPJA urges you to reject proposals to defund the LSC.

Respectfully,

Judge David T. Matia
President, OCPJA

DTM/dej
cc: Members of Congress (Ohio)