

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 9, 2019

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related
Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related
Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Moran and Ranking Member Shaheen:

We write asking you to include robust funding for the Legal Services Corporation ("LSC") in the Fiscal Year 2020 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

The FY 2019 Consolidated Appropriation provided LSC with \$415 million. In a difficult budget environment, this was a critical increase of \$5 million over FY 2018. We are grateful for your support for this important program.

The need for civil legal aid is greater now than ever. Over 60 million Americans, or 18.5% of the U.S. population, currently qualify for legal assistance from LSC-funded programs. Eligible constituents span every demographic and live in rural, suburban, and urban areas. In 2017, LSC released a study, "The Justice Gap: Measuring the Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Low-Income Americans," that showed that 86% of the civil legal problems of low-income Americans received inadequate or no legal help in the past year. That means that hundreds of thousands of veterans, elderly victims of foreclosure, and women and children desperate to escape domestic violence are not getting the assistance they desperately need.

LSC funding is essential to rural communities. Federal funding allows access to the courts and justice to rural populations who in most cases would not have access to a lawyer without federal funding. For many states with large rural areas, funding from LSC represents the majority of their funding. Nearly 80% of LSC's funding is awarded to local programs with a service area that includes a rural population. Without LSC funding, these populations would not receive assistance.

Recent research shows that civil legal aid is a good investment of taxpayer dollars, as it reduces clients' reliance on other types of governmental aid and enhances their ability to participate in the marketplace. Several state studies show that investment in civil legal aid stimulates significant economic benefits for communities, saving millions in emergency shelter costs, health care, foster care and law enforcement.

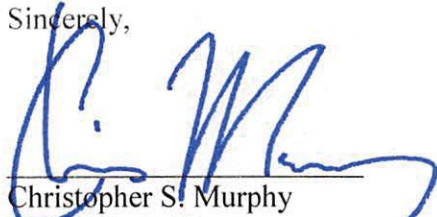
Further, legal aid programs have been critical in providing legal assistance to low-income

residents impacted by natural disasters. LSC programs help disaster victims obtain FEMA and other government disaster-related benefits, assist with life, medical and property insurance claims, replace wills and other important legal documents, and provide counsel on mortgage-foreclosure and other housing matters.

Legal services are essential. Therefore, we request that the Subcommittee robustly fund the LSC in Fiscal Year 2020 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. Without increases in federal funding, many more of our most vulnerable citizens will be denied critical legal assistance.

Sincerely,



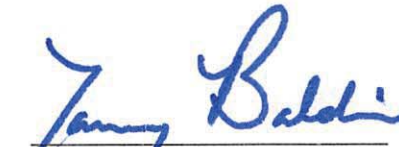
Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



John Cornyn
United States Senator




Dan Sullivan
United States Senator



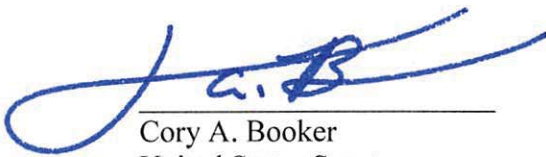
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



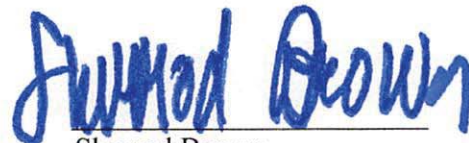
Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator




Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



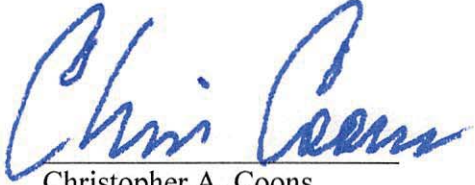
Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



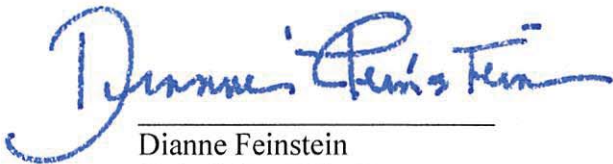
Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



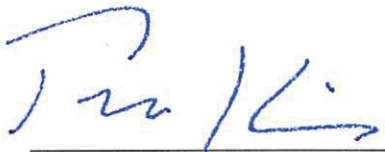
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



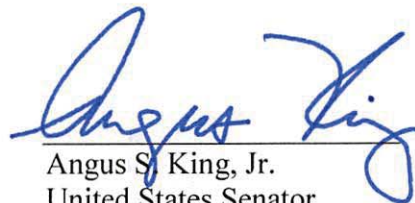
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Doug Jones
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



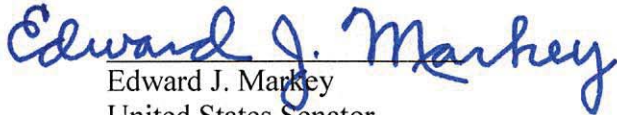
Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



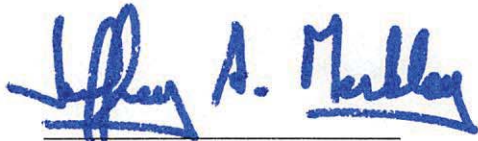
Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



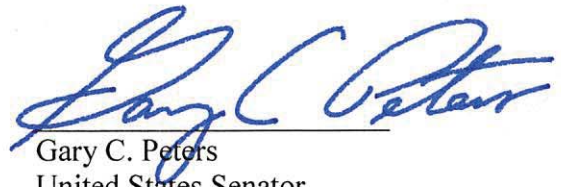
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



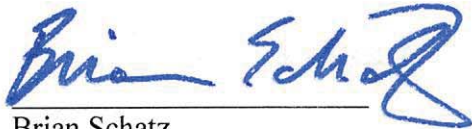
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator



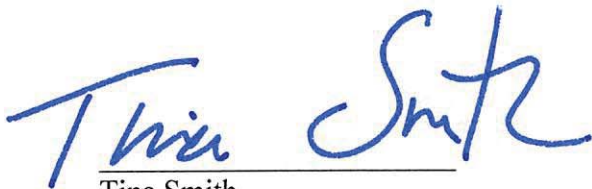
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



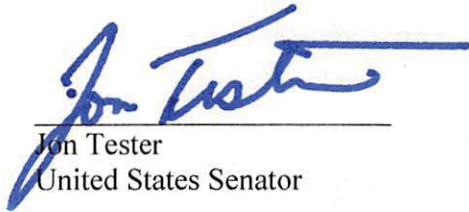
Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator

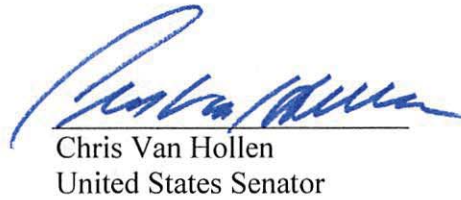


Tina Smith
United States Senator



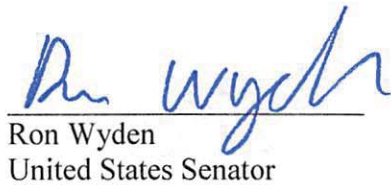
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

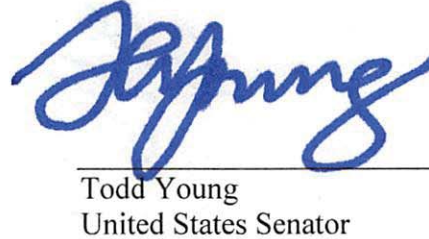

Jon Tester
United States Senator


Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

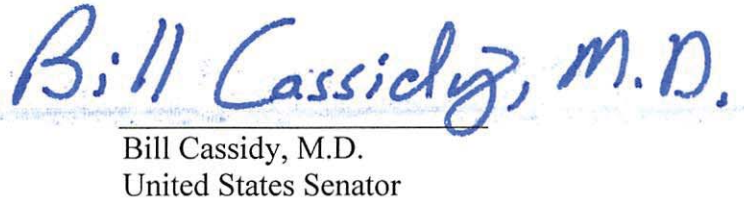

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator


Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator


Ron Wyden
United States Senator


Todd Young
United States Senator


Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator


Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator