

April 7, 2017

The Hon. Michael Bennet  
Senior Senator  
1127 Sherman Street, Suite 150  
Denver, CO 80203

The Hon. Ken Buck  
4<sup>th</sup> District  
900 Castleton Rd., Suite 112  
Castle Rock, CO 80109

The Hon. Cory Gardner  
Junior Senator  
1125 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 525  
Denver, CO 80202

The Hon. Doug Lamborn  
5<sup>th</sup> District  
1125 Kelly Johnson Blvd., Suite 330  
Colorado Springs, CO 80920

The Hon. Diana DeGette  
1<sup>st</sup> District  
600 Grant Street, Suite 202  
Denver, CO 80203

The Hon. Mike Coffman  
6<sup>th</sup> District  
3300 S. Parker Road  
Cherry Creek Place IV, Suite 305  
Aurora, CO 80014

The Hon. Jared Polis  
2<sup>nd</sup> District  
1220 S. College Ave.  
Fort Collins, CO 80525

The Hon. Ed Perlmutter  
7<sup>th</sup> District  
12600 West Colfax Avenue, Suite B-400  
Lakewood, CO 80215

The Hon. Scott Tipton  
3<sup>rd</sup> District  
503 N. Main Street, Suite 658  
Pueblo, CO 81003

Dear Colorado Congressional Leaders:

As leaders of several Colorado bar associations, we write on behalf of our members and the citizens of Colorado to express our deep concern over the Office of Management and Budget's proposed elimination of funding for the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) for fiscal year 2018. Elimination, or even reduction, of LSC's appropriations would have a disastrous impact on Coloradans.

LSC ensures "Equal Justice Under Law" to millions of low-income Americans who otherwise could not afford legal representation. Colorado Legal Services (CLS), a non-profit organization that provides high-quality civil legal services to Colorado residents, is the state's sole LSC grantee. Colorado currently receives \$4.4 million (40% of the state's legal aid funding) from LSC, and that funding already is well below the level of actual need.

CLS plays a critical role in helping Coloradans maintain the basic necessities of life, including food, shelter, utilities, and medical care. It also works to ensure freedom from domestic violence and abuse, and to protect the individual rights of the elderly and those who are physically and mentally disabled. Any federal funding cuts, let alone massive ones, would be profoundly devastating to our state's most vulnerable citizens. Even before the previous round of funding

losses, CLS was unable to meet the need for legal services among the poor because of inadequate resources.

CLS has fewer than 50 staff attorneys statewide, less than half the staff it had 30 years ago, with three times as many clients. It currently serves an eligible population of over 850,000 Coloradans (16% of the state)--yet for every client served, at least one income-eligible client is unfortunately turned away due to already-limited resources. Members of our organizations support CLS's work by providing countless hours of free legal services to individuals in need, but if the organization's funding is cut, CLS may be unable to provide the case screening and mentoring services that make our support possible.

For these reasons, we urge you to work to ensure continuation of the funding that supports this necessary service. As the late Justice Antonin Scalia stated in his remarks celebrating LSC's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2014, LSC "pursues the most fundamental of American ideals," for "without access to quality representation, there is no justice."

We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Asian Pacific Bar Association  
Boulder County Bar Association  
Colorado Bar Association  
Colorado Hispanic Bar Association  
Colorado Women's Bar Association  
Denver Bar Association  
El Paso Bar Association  
LGBT Bar Association  
Sam Cary Bar Association  
South Asian Bar Association