



Coalition of Bar Associations of Color

**RESOLUTION OPPOSING FUTURE CUTS IN THE
LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION BUDGET**

Endorsed March 2016

WHEREAS, the Coalition of Bar Associations of Color (CBAC), organized in 1992, is a coalition created to act as a collective voice for issues of common concern to its member organizations; and

WHEREAS, the member organizations of the CBAC are the Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA), the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA), the National Bar Association (NBA), and the National Native American Bar Association (NNABA); and

WHEREAS, the member organizations of CBAC are the national voices of their respective legal communities in the United States and its territories and possessions; and

WHEREAS, the Legal Services Corporation (“LSC”) was formed in 1974 with bipartisan Congressional support to ensure that all Americans have equal access to legal services and the justice system, regardless of their ability to pay; and

WHEREAS, LSC is the single largest provider of civil legal aid for the nation’s poor; and

WHEREAS, LSC currently funds 134 local programs with approximately 813 offices, serving every county, state, and congressional district in the United States and its territories; and

WHEREAS, local programs funded through LSC provide direct legal services to approximately two million constituents with incomes at or below 125 percent of the federal poverty level based on past census data; and

WHEREAS, local programs funded through LSC provide legal assistance through community outreach presentations, pro bono referrals, and other legal assistance to approximately two million constituents with incomes near, or below, the federal poverty level; and

WHEREAS, LSC grant programs such as the Pro Bono Innovation Fund have expanded initiatives that engage the private bar as a critical resource for supporting legal aid attorneys in addressing the civil legal needs of the low-income community; and

WHEREAS, over 63 million Americans, including 18 million children, may currently qualify for federally funded legal assistance; and

WHEREAS, LSC Justice Gap studies in 2005 and 2009 reported that one in every two individuals who qualified for and actually sought assistance from LSC-funded programs was denied help because of lack of resources; and

WHEREAS, clients of legal services organizations represent all ethnicities and ages, including the working poor, veterans, people facing foreclosure or evictions, families with children, farmers, people with disabilities, domestic violence victims, natural disaster victims, and the elderly; and

WHEREAS, any reduction to LSC's Fiscal Year 2017 or future years' budget would reduce the ability of thousands of the most vulnerable Americans to gain access to critical legal assistance in matters where their homes, their safety, and their independence are at stake; and

WHEREAS, any reduction to LSC's Fiscal Year 2017 or future years' budget would disproportionately impact communities of color and families with incomes near or below the federal poverty level; and

WHEREAS, any reduction to LSC's Fiscal Year 2017 or future years' budget would disproportionately impact Native Americans who lead the nation's population in incomes below the poverty level, with special barriers for obtaining civil legal aid, including geographical isolation, distinct languages and cultures. LSC is the largest funder of civil legal aid to poor Native Americans, within and outside of Indian Country; and

WHEREAS, any reduction to LSC's Fiscal Year 2017 or future years' budget would disproportionately impact the Latino population, increasing throughout the United States, which constitutes a large portion of the working-poor with poverty level incomes and who rely on LSC-funded attorneys experienced with non-English speakers and culture outside the mainstream; and

WHEREAS, any reduction to LSC's Fiscal Year 2017 or future years' budget would disproportionately impact the nation's African American population as African Americans are approximately 27% of the clients served by federally funded legal aid offices; and

WHEREAS, any reduction to LSC's Fiscal Year 2017 or future years' budget would have a disproportionately large impact on programs that rely most heavily on the federal grant, particularly in the states of Alabama, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nevada, South Dakota, and Wyoming; and

WHEREAS, a broad coalition of state bar associations and minority bar associations, including every state bar and all major bars of color, have supported an increase in LSC funding.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that CBAC opposes any proposals to reduce funding for the LSC's Fiscal Year 2017 and future years; and

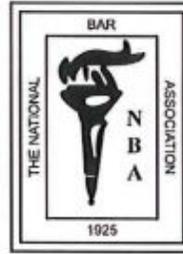
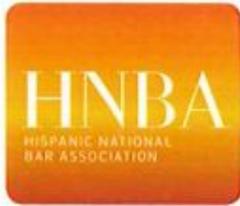
NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that CBAC calls upon Congress to support increased funding for the LSC's Fiscal Year 2017 and future years to help meet the urgent need of vulnerable Americans who need legal assistance; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that this resolution shall be the legislative priority of the CBAC until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

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CERTIFICATION

WE, the duly-elected Presidents of the Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA), the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA), the National Bar Association (NBA), and the National Native American Bar Association (NNABA), hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly enacted by a duly noticed meeting of the Board of Directors.



Robert T. Maldonado

Roberto Maldonado
President, Hispanic National Bar Association

March 1, 2016
Date

Jim Y. Hwang

Jim Hwang
President, National Asian Pacific American Bar Association

March 1, 2016
Date

Benjamin Crump

Benjamin Crump
President, National Bar Association

March 1, 2016
Date

Linda Benally

Linda Benally
President, National Native American Bar Association

March 1, 2016
Date