



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF TRIAL LAWYERS ISSUES STATEMENT ON  
THE DEFUNDING OF LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION**

**Defunding LSC Would Reduce Access to Justice To Most Endangered Citizens**

**IRVINE, CALIFORNIA – MARCH 22, 2017** – The American College of Trial Lawyers has as its mission the improvement of the administration of justice through education and public statements on important legal issues relating to that mission. The College strongly supports the independence of the judiciary, trial by jury, respect for the rule of law, access to justice and fair and just representation of all parties to legal proceedings.

That mission requires the College to speak to the current proposed budget of the Administration regarding the defunding of the Legal Services Corporation (LSC). LSC provides, for those who cannot afford a lawyer, access to the courts in civil cases. We have spoken to Fellows in many States and the conclusion is that completely defunding the LSC would impede the rights to fair and just representation and access to the courts for the poorest among us. The Chief Justice of Texas has recently said that it is critical to keep funding LSC because it is the “backbone” of support for access to justice for the very poor. A group of 150 prominent law firms sent a letter to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Mick Mulvaney that states: “LSC provides vital aid in all 50 states to a wide range of Americans: women seeking protection from domestic violence, families struggling to stay in their homes, homeless Veterans seeking benefits they earned, disaster victims needing help to recover.”

The College agrees that totally defunding the LSC would greatly reduce access to justice for our most endangered citizens. The College supports a fair appropriation for the LSC so that all Americans may have access to our justice system. The College’s Access to Justice and Legal Services Committee chaired by Texas Fellow Barry Abrams will coordinate a response for those Fellows who would like to contact their elected representatives on this important issue.

The American College of Trial Lawyers is composed of preeminent members of the Trial Bar from the United States and Canada and is recognized as the leading trial lawyers organization in both countries. The College is dedicated to maintaining and improving the standards of trial practice, the administration of justice and the ethics of the profession. The College has long supported the independence of the Judiciary and respect for the courts in the United States and Canada; that independence is fundamental to our democratic societies.

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