



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF TRIAL LAWYERS ISSUES STATEMENT ON
LATEST ROUND TO DEFUND LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION**

Defunding LSC Would Reduce Access to Justice To Most Endangered Citizens

NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA – MARCH 6, 2018 – 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 2019 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.

LSC is the largest provider of civil legal services for the poor, funding 133 legal aid programs in 800 offices in every county in every state and the territories. LSC was created in 1974 with wide bipartisan support. LSC funded programs to serve low income individuals, children, families, seniors and veterans across the country. Congress has funded LSC for the past forty-three years with strong bipartisan majorities.

In last year's 2018 budget proposal, the Administration also proposed completely defunding LSC and in response, a broad and bipartisan cross section of the legal and business community, states attorneys general and state legislators strongly voiced support for LSC. Congress passed a series of Continuing Resolutions maintaining LSC's funding at the 2017 level.

The College again calls on Congress to fund LSC at a fair appropriation so that all Americans may have access to our justice system. The College's Access to Justice and Legal Services Committee chaired by Arizona Fellow Peter Akmajian 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. To learn more about the College, visit www.actl.com.

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