



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

May 5, 2017

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
H-305 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
H-305 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Culberson
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
and Related Agencies
H-310 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable José Serrano
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
Science, and Related Agencies
H-310 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jean Shaheen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairmen Frelinghuysen, Culberson, Cochran, and Shelby, Ranking Members Lowey, Serrano, and Shaheen, and Vice Chairman Leahy:

The undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) write to express our grave concern about the potential elimination of the Legal Services Corporation (LSC). CCD is the largest coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for Federal public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society.

As organizations committed to advocating for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities to participate fully and equally in society, we value the critical legal assistance to persons with disabilities made available by the LSC. More than 11.6 million persons are eligible for legal aid. Nearly one in five of those are persons with disabilities. Legal Services lawyers represent low-income people with disabilities in a wide range of important matters, such as securing services to enable parents with disabilities to keep their families together and avoid losing custody of their children, obtaining reasonable accommodations to ensure that individuals with disabilities can remain in their housing and keep their jobs, and obtaining eligibility for Medicaid, SSI and other public benefits programs as well as preventing the loss of needed Medicaid services. Moreover, Legal Services lawyers help people with disabilities obtain critical home and community based services that enable them to remain in their homes and communities, rather than more expensive nursing homes or other such institutions.

Whether representing a single mother who was terminated for not showing up at work despite having requested FMLA leave to take her two-year-old son with a disability to his monthly doctor visits, securing Medicare benefits to cover the costs of a kidney transplant for a 34-year-old man who would die without the surgery, or assisting a 54-year-old man with a disability terminate a guardianship that was no longer necessary so he could live independently, the work of legal service attorneys has a tremendous impact on the lives of persons with disabilities.

Despite the essential role played by LSC, the [budget “blueprint” released](#) by the White House would eliminate funding for LSC, leaving millions of persons with disabilities with critical legal needs without assistance to navigate many aspects of the legal process and denying them the help they need to ensure that their basic needs are met.

We urge that, in determining appropriations for 2018, you ensure that LSC remains fully funded. Please contact Jennifer Mathis at the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law with any questions, at jenniferm@bazelon.org, (202) 467-5730 ext. 1313.

Sincerely,

ACCSES

American Association on Health and Disability

American Association of People with Disabilities

American Foundation for the Blind

The Arc of the United States

Association of University Centers on Disabilities

Autistic Self Advocacy Network

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

Center for Public Representation

Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates, Inc.

Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund

Epilepsy Foundation

Justice in Aging

National Association of State Directors of Special Education

National Disability Rights Network

National Health Law Program

Paralyzed Veterans of America

Special Needs Alliance

United Cerebral Palsy