



## **Federal Funding for Legal Services Corporation Threatened Call to Action: Contact Maine Congressional Delegation**

February 21, 2017

**LSC on Hit List.** The Maine Justice Foundation has learned from both the American Bar Association and the National Legal Aid and Defender Association that the federal Legal Services Corporation (LSC) is on a hit list.

On February 16, 2017, the U.S. Senate confirmed John (Mick) Mulvaney to head the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the agency that develops the budget and spending priorities. The federal budget process soon will begin in both the White House and Congress. On February 17, 2017, the New York Times reported, “The White House budget office has drafted a hit list of programs that President Trump could eliminate to trim domestic spending, including longstanding conservative targets like the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Legal Services Corporation, AmeriCorps and the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities.”  
[https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/17/us/politics/trump-program-eliminations-white-house-budget-office.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/17/us/politics/trump-program-eliminations-white-house-budget-office.html?_r=0)

Maine’s recipient of LSC funds—Pine Tree Legal Assistance—received \$1,383,586 in FY 2016. This was around 1/5 of their total budget. In FY 2015, Pine Tree helped 13,992 people, almost 40% of whom were children.

**Call to Action.** Congress is in recess the week of February 20-24. ***Please contact your Senator and Congressperson while they are home this week.*** See page 2 for their contact information.

Please let them know how critical LSC funding is to assuring access to justice in Maine and underscore the critical work that Pine Tree Legal Assistance does to serve rural communities, veterans, victims of domestic abuse and natural disasters. Thank them for their past support of LSC, and ask them to step up their support during this precarious time.

- Senator Collins is a member of both the Senate Appropriations Committee and its Commerce, Justice and Science Subcommittee. These are both critical committees.
- In the last Congress, Senator King signed on to a letter to the Senate Appropriations Committee urging support of LSC funding.
- Representative Pingree has been supportive of LSC funding in the past.
- Representative Poliquin voted against an amendment proposed by Rep. Pittinger in the last Congress to decrease funding to LSC by \$25 million in FY 2016.

Stay tuned for more calls to action as the budget process unfolds over the next few months. See page 3 for ABA President Linda A. Klein’s statement of support for LSC. You might want to borrow some of its language.

**What to Expect Next in the Budget Process.** The National Legal Aid and Defender Association anticipates that the following funding developments will unfold in Congress:

**FY 2017.** First, OMB will develop a plan to finalize spending for FY 2017. The current continuing resolution is set to expire on April 28. Republican leadership in both the House and the Senate have indicated to appropriators that they can begin negotiations on each of the remaining 11 spending bills that are pending before Congress. Appropriators are optimistic that they can work each bill out individually prior to April 28.

However, with Mulvaney's late confirmation and other business before the Congress, chances are that bills will be grouped in packages to assure final passage or the continuing resolution could end up being extended through the end of the federal fiscal year. A distinct possibility remains in either scenario that across the board cuts could be applied that would affect federal discretionary funding for programs such as LSC.

**FY 2018.** OMB also will finalize the administration's FY 2018 budget request. Mulvaney has indicated that the administration will present a preliminary outline by early March and the full White House budget request in April. The outline is expected to be presented as early as February 28, the date of the president's State of the Union address. It is not clear if the outline will include details about specific funding recommendations for accounts such as LSC. It is possible that the administration's LSC request will be known by the end of this month, but it certainly will be known by the April budget submission by OMB.

## **Contact Information for Maine's Congressional Delegation**

### ***Senator Susan Collins***

Augusta Office (207) 622-8414  
Bangor Office (207) 945-0417  
Biddeford Office (207) 283-1101  
Caribou Office (207) 493-7873  
Lewiston Office (207) 784-6969  
Portland Office (207) 780-3575  
Washington DC Office (202) 224-2523  
Email: <https://www.collins.senate.gov/contact?>

### ***Senator Angus King***

Toll-free number for Maine Offices (800) 432-1599  
Augusta Office (207) 622-8292  
Bangor Office (207) 945-8000  
Presque Isle Office (207) 764-5124  
Scarborough Office (207) 883-1588  
Washington DC Office (202) 224-5344  
Email: <https://www.king.senate.gov/contact?>

### ***Congresswoman Chellie Pingree***

Portland Office (207) 774-5019  
Waterville Office (207) 873-5713  
Washington DC Office (202) 225-6116  
Email: <https://pingree.house.gov/contact/email-me>

### ***Representative Bruce Poliquin***

Bangor Office (207) 942-0583  
Lewiston Office (207) 784-0768  
Presque Isle Office (207) 764-2822  
Washington DC Office (202) 225-6306  
Email: <https://poliquin.house.gov/contact/email>

## **American Bar Association**

[www.americanbar.org/news](http://www.americanbar.org/news)

**Statement of Linda A. Klein**

**President, American Bar Association  
Support for the Legal Services Corporation**

The American Bar Association staunchly supports a robust Legal Services Corporation (LSC) to assure access to justice for all, the very idea that propelled our nation to independence. Our nation's core values are reflected in the LSC's work in securing housing for veterans, freeing seniors from scams, serving rural areas when others won't, protecting battered women, helping disaster survivors back to their feet, and many others.

The LSC embodies these principles by securing the rights of the least fortunate among us, approximately 1.9 million families annually. Over the years, the LSC has drawn bipartisan support in Congress, where it is recognized that the benefits of the LSC's work reach every congressional district. Thirty cost-benefit analyses all show that legal aid returns far more benefits than costs to communities across America.

The American Bar Association was committed to the creation of the LSC when it was established in 1974 and today remains steadfastly determined to support its continued ability to fulfill its mission.