

NEWS RELEASE
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DEFEND LEGAL AID: Joint Press Conference to Defend the Legal Services Corporation

Madison, WI – End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Equal Justice Fund, the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, the Wisconsin Council on Children & Families and the State Bar of Wisconsin appeared at two press conferences today in Milwaukee and Madison to oppose the proposed elimination of the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) and share the profound effects it would have on Wisconsin's most vulnerable citizens and our justice system. The groups are joined by 40 other organizations for a "Wisconsin Day of Action" supporting LSC.

The recently unveiled federal budget blueprint proposes to completely eliminate the LSC. In Wisconsin, the LSC provides almost half the funding for two of our most valued legal partners: Legal Action of Wisconsin and Wisconsin Judicare. Without this funding, Judicare has indicated that it would have to close its doors, and Legal Action's services would have to be dramatically reduced.

State Bar President Fran Deisinger says, "the State Bar of Wisconsin is gravely concerned about the proposed elimination of the LSC, the burden that will place on low income families in Wisconsin, and the resulting challenges to our state's justice system."

Both organizations provide critically needed free, high-quality civil legal aid to low-income Wisconsinites, including veterans, seniors, and people with disabilities. They prevent evictions and homelessness. They defend and protect Wisconsin's seniors facing exploitation and abuse. They ensure justice for low-income consumers. They provide free legal representation to people denied public benefits. They help low-income job seekers restore their driver's licenses, get criminal records expunged, and overcome other barriers to employment. They represent thousands of low-income survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking each year.

"Eliminating the Legal Services Corporation would eliminate lifesaving services for domestic violence victims and their children," said Patti Seger, executive director of End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin. "LSC-funded agencies, like Legal Action and Judicare, are on the frontlines of protecting victims of domestic violence and their children who are involved in child custody and other civil legal matters. The notion of abandoning victims and their children in court and leaving them to fend for themselves is unconscionable."

Last year, Legal Action and Judicare solved nearly 12,000 civil legal aid problems for low-income Wisconsinites every year in cities and small towns across Wisconsin. LSC funding also allows them to support hundreds of volunteer attorneys who donate over \$1 million of their time. Nationally, legal aid helps secure the rights of approximately 1.9 million families annually.

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The State Bar of Wisconsin is the mandatory professional association, created by the Wisconsin Supreme Court, for attorneys who hold a Wisconsin law license. With more than 25,000 members, the State Bar aids the courts in improving the administration of justice, provides continuing legal education for its members to help them maintain their expertise, and assists Wisconsin lawyers in carrying out community service initiatives to educate the public about the legal system and the value of lawyers. For more information, visit [HYPERLINK "http://www.wisbar.org"](http://www.wisbar.org) \t "_blank" www.wisbar.org.