

April 17, 2018

To: All Members of Congress:

The undersigned 251 corporate legal department leaders from across the country write to urge you to deliver on the promise of equal justice for all Americans by providing an increase in funding for the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) for FY19. In every state in our country, low-income people rely on civil legal assistance to help them protect their livelihoods, their health, and their families. LSC is the foundation on which the civil justice infrastructure is built, and we strongly believe that access to counsel is vital both for the health of our democracy and the prosperity of our communities.

As lawyers, we understand clearly how those who cannot afford to pay for an attorney when facing a legal problem are deeply disadvantaged by the complexity of our justice system. When improperly addressed, civil legal problems can result in life-altering consequences as significant as the loss of income or a home, lack of access to physical safety, or denial of benefits earned by serving in our military. As corporate leaders, we recognize that the problems affecting our communities directly impact the success of our businesses. LSC grantees help families gain a foothold in the middle class, strengthening our local workforce and economy, including by serving:

- active duty military personnel, as well as veterans returning from wars;
- individuals and families impacted by the opioid crisis;
- domestic violence victims;
- elderly individuals;
- families who are in danger of losing their homes;
- victims of natural disasters such as hurricanes;
- families involved in child custody disputes; and
- small business owners

This is why corporations across America are steadily increasing their investment in pro bono programs, through which we are able to contribute to our local communities in a significant way. These efforts are made possible by partnerships with civil legal aid programs, without which pro bono volunteers could not receive either the necessary training and guidance, or the access to clients who need help. Through these partnerships, the private sector greatly extends the impact of the federal investment in LSC.

The network of LSC grantees serves Americans in every state and territory, but it is especially critical for those underserved communities, particularly in rural areas, for whom there are no other options. Without a robust investment in LSC, the disparity in access to justice will continue to widen along geographic contours as civil legal aid remains less accessible to those who live outside our major cities.

The promise of equal justice for all engenders trust in our justice system. Such trust is an important competitive advantage for our country that attracts investment from across the world. LSC ensures that we keep this promise. We urge Congress to demonstrate its commitment to our country's foundational values, the success of our businesses, and the strength of our people by expanding its investment in LSC.

Sincerely,

John F. Schultz

Executive Vice President, Chief Legal and
Administrative Officer
Hewlett Packard Enterprise
*Immediate Past Chair, NLADA Corporate
Advisory Committee*

Sean Edgett

General Counsel
Twitter

Ivan Fong

Senior Vice President, Legal Affairs and
General Counsel
3M

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Executive Vice President, Chief of Legal,
Corporate Services and Secretary
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Augusto Aragone

Executive Vice President, Secretary and
General Counsel
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Chief Legal Officer
Liberty Media Corporation

Bob Bailey

Chief Legal Officer
Allergan plc

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Cummins Inc.

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General Counsel
Global Investment Alliance Inc.

Jacquelyne Belcastro

Vice President & General Counsel
Extrusion North America at Hydro

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Vice President and General Counsel
Arconic
Chair, NLADA Corporate Advisory Committee

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Corporate Secretary
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Senior Vice President & General Counsel
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Executive Vice President and General Counsel
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and Secretary
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Executive Vice President, General Counsel
and Secretary
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General Counsel and Senior Research Advisor
Colonial Consulting, LLC

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Vice President and General Counsel
Northeast Delta Dental

Sheryl Bollinger

President, CEO & General Counsel
AMG National Trust Bank

Erin E. Brady

Vice President and General Counsel
Century Mortgage Company

Peter Bragdon

Executive Vice President, Chief
Administrative Officer, General Counsel
Columbia Sportswear Company

Alan Braverman

Senior Executive Vice President, General
Counsel and Secretary
The Walt Disney Company

Jeffrey S. Bromme, Esq.

Executive Vice President
Chief Legal Officer
Adventist Health System

Gary E. Brown

General Counsel
Pyro Spectaculars Group of Companies

Marcus V. Brown

Executive Vice President
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Boston Properties, Inc.

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Senior Vice President, General Counsel
LinkedIn

Edward E. Case

Senior Vice President & Chief Legal Officer
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and Corporate Secretary
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Senior Vice President and General Counsel,
Chief Compliance Officer
Cisco

Lynn Charytan

Executive Vice President and General Counsel
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General Counsel, Compliance Officer and
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Executive Vice President, General Counsel
and Secretary
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Executive Vice President and General Counsel
Fidelity Investments

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General Counsel
Exemplis LLC

Min Cho

Vice President and General Counsel
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Executive Vice President and General Counsel
U.S. Bancorp

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General Counsel
Christopher Ranch LLC

Jon Coleman

General Counsel
CoStar Group, Inc.

Rhonda L. Comer

General Counsel and Senior Vice President
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Nationwide Children's Hospital

Matthew Cooper

General Counsel
Capital One

Nancy Cremins

Chief Administrative Officer & General
Counsel
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Executive Vice President Human Resources &
General Counsel
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Nithya Das

Chief People and Legal Officer
AppNexus

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Senior Vice President and General Counsel
Xperi Corporation

Elliot Davis

Senior Vice President, General Counsel, Chief
Compliance Officer & Secretary
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General Counsel
Natelli Communités

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Corporate Secretary
Tampico Beverages, Inc.

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Senior Vice President Corporate Affairs, Chief
Legal Officer and Secretary
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and Corporate Secretary
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Senior Vice President & General Counsel
General Electric

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United Service Companies, Inc.

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Chief Legal Officer, North America
Lloyds Banking Group

Pauline E. Doohan

Vice President and General Counsel
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General Counsel
Phusion Projects, LLC

Aaron Drabkin

General Counsel
OBXtek

Paul Ehrlich

General Counsel
adidas

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& Secretary
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Meena Elliott

Senior Vice President, Chief Legal &
Administrative Officer, Corporate Secretary
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Secretary
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Michelle Fang

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Turo, Inc.

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Executive Vice President and General Counsel
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David T. Fisfis

Vice President, Rates & Regulatory Affairs,
General Counsel and Corporate Secretary
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Rick Frecker

Executive Vice President, General Counsel
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Conor French

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Funding Circle USA, Inc.

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Outside General Counsel
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Macy's, Inc.

Heidi Garfield

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Secretary
Shutterstock

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Vice President - Law and General Counsel
Northwestern Mutual

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Chief Administrative Officer and General
Counsel
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Director
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Human Resources Development Institute, Inc.
(HRDI)

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Executive Vice President and General Counsel
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Stephen P. Gottesfeld

Executive Vice President and General Counsel
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Corporate Secretary, General Counsel and
Compliance Officer, Vice President of Medical
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Principal & CLO
Crown Canyon Capital, LLC.

Julie Gruber

Executive Vice President & Global General
Counsel
The Gap, Inc.

Daniel R. Hackett

General Counsel
Mount Carmel Health System

Susan Hackett

CEO and CLO
Legal Executive Leadership, LLC

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Executive Vice President, General Counsel
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Timothy P. Harris

Executive Vice President and General Counsel
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Executive Vice President, Secretary & General
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Secretary
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Taco John's International, Inc.

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General Counsel
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Corporate Citizenship
Dun & Bradstreet

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and Corporate Secretary
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Cosmo Corporation

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Moto, Inc.

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General Counsel
Global Knowledge

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RetailMeNot, Inc.

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Appliance Factory

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Corinne P. Kevorkian

Senior Vice President, Administration and
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Whitsons Culinary Group

Amit Khanna

General Counsel
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General Counsel
Hayes Performance Systems

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EVP, Chief Administrative Officer & General
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Sandra Leung

General Counsel
Bristol-Myers Squibb Company

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Lewis Builders Development, Inc.

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Chief Legal Officer, VP Finance & Secretary
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General Counsel, Vice President
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Gretchen Nagy

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Legal Officer
The Krystal Company & On The Border
Mexican Grill & Cantina

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and Chief Compliance Officer
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Western Digital Corporation

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Chief Legal and Corporate Affairs Officer
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General Counsel
Expa

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and General Counsel
PSCU

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CRB

Raymond Sczudlo

General Counsel
b.well Connected Health, Inc.

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General Counsel
Compusearch

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Secretary
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Executive Vice President for Public Policy &
General Counsel
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Development and General Counsel
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Microsoft Corporation

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General Counsel & Chief Legal Officer
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Executive Vice President, General Counsel
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Executive Vice President – General Counsel &
Corporate Affairs
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Colin Stretch

Vice President and General Counsel
Facebook

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General Counsel
Rick Engineering Company

Colin Sullivan

Head of Legal
Patreon, Inc.

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Eaton

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General Counsel
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& Corporate Secretary
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Company

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Senior Vice President, General Counsel, and
Corporate Secretary
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PeopleConnect, Inc.

Michael Touff

Senior Vice President and General Counsel
MDC Holdings, Inc.

Amy Tu

Executive Vice President and General Counsel
Tyson Foods, Inc.

Lawrence Tu

Senior Executive Vice President and Chief
Legal Officer
CBS Corporation

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and Corporate Secretary
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Chief Legal Officer
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General Counsel
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Kent Walker

SVP & General Counsel
Google LLC

Brian Walters

Senior Vice President & General Counsel
Matthews International

Hilary Wandall

General Counsel, Corporate Secretary, and
Chief Data Governance Officer
TrustArc

Amy Weaver

President, Legal & General Counsel
Salesforce.com, Inc.

Clifford Weber

Senior Vice President & General Counsel
PCSB Bank

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Executive Vice President, General Counsel
and Corporate Secretary
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Rohan Weerasinghe

General Counsel & Corporate Secretary
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Tony West

Chief Legal Officer and Corporate Secretary
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Secretary
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Vice President, General Counsel & Secretary
Rexnord Corporation

Christine Wheatley

Group Vice President, Secretary and General
Counsel
The Kroger Co.

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General Counsel and Chief Administrative
Officer
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Allyson Willoughby

General Counsel
CareZone

T. Lane Wilson

Senior Vice President and General Counsel
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Eric G. Winston

Executive Vice President, General Counsel
and Chief Ethics & Compliance Officer
Mphasis

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SVP, General Counsel and Corporate
Secretary
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Corporate Secretary
Cargill, Incorporated

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Petal Card, Inc.

Jonathan Wright

Chief Legal Officer
QPharma, Inc.

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Executive Vice President, Government Affairs,
General Counsel and Corporate Secretary
PepsiCo, Inc.

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Terracon Consultants, Inc.

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Chief Legal Officer
CSAA Insurance Group

Michael Zuckert
General Counsel
Silicon Valley Bank