

Adopted by the board,
as amended, 1/8/74.

see #8. REAUTHORIZATION POSITION STATEMENT

In its inception, the Legal Services Corporation was designed to embody the fundamental principles of equal access to justice and a fair opportunity for competent high quality representation in civil matters for this nation's poor.

Today, with 14 percent of the American population and 21 percent of American's children in poverty, the need for civil legal assistance to the poor cannot be understated.

The Board of Directors of LSC adopts as its position strong support to urge Congress to pass Reauthorization legislation in keeping with the following precepts:

1. The federal funding commitment to legal services must be restored and increased.

2. Legal services programs should have the same ability as would a private attorney to provide legal services clients a full range of services in all civil matters without undue restrictions. Legal services clients should have access to civil legal assistance to pursue and resolve their grievances in all forums and ways available to other residents and citizens under our system of laws.

3. Legal services programs should be encouraged to freely seek and obtain non-LSC funds (public and private) unencumbered by LSC restrictions, in accordance with the guidelines of the funding source.

4. Local control of legal services programs should be preserved and strengthened, to allow the local Board of Directors to make decisions about the program priorities for allocation of

scarce financial and staff resources, and governance. Local governance should effectively involve locally appointed clients and attorneys appointed by the local bar associations, and reflect the diversity of the local legal and client community.

5. Coordination of local, state and national advocacy should be preserved and strengthened to assist in achieving high quality legal services to the poor.

6. Competent, high quality monitoring and evaluation of programs should be conducted with a view toward both assuring effective accountability to Congress and to the clients who are served and to improve the quality of the programs providing legal services.

7. Innovation and experimentation which is designed to improve program delivery and use of scarce resources should be encouraged.

8. A fair process which includes ^{notice & timely full & fair hearing} ~~independent~~ ^{before an independent hearing officer} judgments should guide any administrative procedure which would result in defundings or reductions or suspensions of funding of LSC programs.