

MISSISSIPPI  
**Access to Justice**  
COMMISSION

JUSTICE *for* ALL

June 9, 2014

VIA EMAIL

David Richardson  
Treasurer  
Legal Services Corporation  
3333 K. Street, NW 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20007-33522

Re: FY 2017 Budget Comments

Dear Mr. Richardson:

We are writing to inform you of the Mississippi Access to Justice Commission's (the Commission) strong support for full and continued funding of Mississippi's Legal Services Programs, the Mississippi Center for Legal Services Corporation (MCLSC) and North Mississippi Rural Legal Services (NMRLS). Both MCLSC and NMRLS have been *ex-officio* members of our Commission since its founding in 2006. As the Co-Chairs of the Commission, we are familiar with the invaluable service these programs provide to the state's most vulnerable residents.

Mississippi, being one of the poorest in the nation, has a tremendous need for the services provided through the LSC. As you may well know, Mississippi is ranked last in the nation in terms of funding from all sources for civil legal aid to the poor. There are 688,000+ Mississippians who qualify financially for the services provided through the LSC and less than 30 federally-funded legal services staff attorneys for the entire state. Even with the help of the private bar and organized efforts such as the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project, many are turned away because of the lack of adequate resources. Without question, the potential for a reduction in the budgets to our LSC programs would have a devastating effect on thousands of children, elderly, veterans and families throughout Mississippi.

We are so grateful for the support the LSC has provided to people of Mississippi. If the Commission can ever be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely yours,



Honorable Denise S. Owens  
Co-Chair



H. Rodger Wilder  
Co-Chair