

CONFERENCE OF CHIEF JUSTICES CONFERENCE OF STATE COURT ADMINISTRATORS

Resolution 11

In Support of Increased Federal Funding For the Legal Services Corporation

WHEREAS, the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators have worked steadfastly to maintain access to justice as a cornerstone of our legal system; and

WHEREAS, the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) was established in 1974 by bipartisan vote of the United States Congress to meet the access to justice needs of those excluded from the legal system because of the unavailability of legal resources; and

WHEREAS, the LSC is a critical component of the national access to justice system through its funding of nonprofit organizations that provide legal services in every state and territory; and

WHEREAS, the number of individuals in need of legal services has dramatically risen due, in part, to increased unemployment, foreclosures, debt problems, and difficulties accessing medical care as a result of the current financial crisis; and

WHEREAS, *Documenting the Justice Gap in America* indicates that, in 2005, even before the current economic crisis, half of those who applied for services from LSC grantees were turned away due to a lack of resources; and

WHEREAS, the current economic crisis is greatly restricting state and local capacity to support programs that provide legal services, including a very dramatic reduction in funding available from Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts due to a substantial decline in interest paid on lawyers' trust accounts which is used to fund local legal services programs; and

WHEREAS, the federal 2009 LSC budget is significantly lower than the inflation-adjusted 1995 appropriation, and although the President's 2010 budget proposes increased LSC funding, LSC funding will remain more than \$140 million less than its inflation-adjusted 1995 appropriation;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conferences support increased federal funding on a continuing basis for LSC to better meet the demand for legal services and to ensure access to justice for all.

Adopted as proposed by the CCJ/COSCA Public Trust and Confidence in the Judiciary Committee at the CCJ/COSCA Annual Meeting in August 2009.