



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Statement from Richard L. Tate, Chair,  
Texas Access to Justice Foundation  
*On Effects of Sequester Funding Cuts to  
Texas Legal Aid***

AUSTIN, Texas – The following statement was issued today by Richard L. Tate, chair of the Texas Access to Justice Foundation board of directors:

“As we work to maintain the state funding level for legal aid programs in Texas, we learned the effects of sequester at the federal level will have a detrimental impact on our statewide delivery system and our programs funded by the Legal Services Corporation (LSC).

In Texas, the three largest providers of civil legal services – Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas, Lone Star Legal Aid, and Texas RioGrande Legal Aid – will face a combined reduction of more than \$1.3 million in LSC funding beginning in April 2013. This is in addition to the \$6.1 million annualized loss that began in 2011 resulting in significantly fewer services available to those most in need. Legal Services Corporation funding comprises approximately one-third of the funding for legal aid in Texas.

This funding cut will directly affect the families who desperately seek representation in cases like those involving child abuse, domestic violence, foreclosures, and denial of disability benefits to veterans.

These cuts are exacerbated by the precipitous decline of revenue from the Interest on Lawyers’ Trust Accounts (IOLTA) program, a primary source of legal aid funding, due to historically low interest rates. In Texas, we are fortunate to have the support of the Texas Supreme Court and the Texas Legislature, which provided critical state funding, to help deal with some of the gap resulting from the IOLTA funding crisis. Regrettably, the LSC cuts further widen the already existing gap.

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We will continue to work to find solutions for funding legal aid at the national, state, and local levels. We will also continue to inform lawmakers, lawyers and the public about the critical need for legal services and the role of the rule of law in these very difficult economic times.”

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*The **Texas Access to Justice Foundation** ([www.teajf.org](http://www.teajf.org)), created by the Supreme Court of Texas in 1984, is the leading state-based funding source for the provision of civil legal aid in Texas. The organization is committed to the vision that all Texans will have equal access to justice, regardless of their income. The Foundation administers a variety of funding sources, which are earmarked to assist nonprofit organizations in providing legal aid to approximately 100,000 Texas families each year.*