

The Oregon legal community is reacting to a proposed federal budget that would eliminate the Legal Services Corporation (LSC). Oregon lawyers do not want our legal aid programs to be cut.

The Oregon State Bar shares this concern, and with good reason. By providing funding for civil legal help for Oregon's poor, LSC protects people's health and safety, and keeps them in their homes and in their jobs. To assure a fair and equal justice system, everyone must have a fair shot at being heard. That is precisely what LSC and legal aid provide, and what is suddenly at risk.

Locally, there is reason to be both proud and hopeful. Here in Oregon, legal aid has a long history of strong bipartisan support in both the state legislature and among our federal representatives. Republicans, democrats, businesses and social service agencies in this state have long stood together on legal aid. Indeed, in a uniquely Oregon partnership, many of our banks voluntarily offer higher interest rates on lawyer trust accounts, just to support legal services.

This broad bipartisan support is remarkable. As a legal community, we will work with our elected representatives to continue a sustained focus on a fair and accessible legal system. A system where our neighbors can know their rights, and get the help they need to protect them. Nationally and in Salem, we are committed to sharing our concerns about the impact any LSC cuts could have at the community level, where issues like domestic violence, unlawful eviction, consumer fraud and denial of health and veterans benefits continue to be priorities for legal aid providers.

For lawyers, there are steps you can take today.

- Say that you will stand up for your local legal aid office. You can help offset any future cuts by contributing to the Campaign for Equal Justice. <http://www.cejoregon.org/donate-pledge.shtml>
- Volunteer to take on a pro bono matter. There are ample opportunities in a wide variety of areas. <http://www.osbar.org/probono/>
- Make sure your IOLTA account is with a Leadership Bank, working with the Oregon Law Foundation to support legal aid through above-market interest rates. If you are already with a Leadership Bank, please thank them for their commitment to justice. [www.oregonlawfoundation.org/](http://www.oregonlawfoundation.org/)

For Oregon's broader community, we are proud and thankful for your continued support, and we welcome your energy.