

June 1, 2014



Dear Virginia State Bar Member:

For several years now, my predecessors have included this plea for donations to Legal Aid in your annual dues statement. This year, I hope you will pay special attention and act to address the ever widening gap between the growing unmet legal needs of low-income Virginians and the shrinking resources provided to fund our civil Legal Aid programs.

While Senator Tommy Norment has worked especially hard to improve Legal Aid funding the past several years, Legal Aid's funding losses since 2008 have far outstripped his valiant efforts to replace those losses. Interest rates still hover near 0% and the IOLTA program revenue that used to be one of Legal Aid's primary funding sources, has shrunk from \$4.6 million in FY 2007 to less than \$600,000 these past several years, a \$4 million annual loss. And, while Legal Aid programs received a small increase in their federal funding this year (about \$300,000), that increase pales in comparison to the \$1.2 million in federal funding cuts since 2009.

Finally, because of the recessionary impact on overall legal activity the past six years, Legal Aid's largest source of funding, the civil Filing Fee add-on, has declined by almost \$1 million since 2009.

Legal Services Corporation of Virginia (LSCV), which provides statewide oversight and funding for Virginia's local Legal Aid programs, informs us that the impact of these ongoing, cumulative funding losses is a **20% reduction in staff** levels since 2009: **35 Legal Aid attorneys have been laid off** or lost through attrition. **30 additional intake and support staff** members have also been laid off and requests for assistance have never been higher.

My plea to you all is to step up this year and let's really give Legal Aid a helping hand! Give generously and take one of their pro bono referrals. If every Virginia lawyer donates \$50, we can raise \$1,500,000 and hire back some of the many lawyers and staff laid off during the recession. Include an additional check with your VSB dues payment made out to Legal Services Corporation of Virginia. Because LSCV is a 501(c)(3), your contribution will be tax deductible. I know our Legal Aid staffs will be extremely grateful for any help you can provide!

Please note that LSCV's address has changed: Mail your contributions to: Legal Services Corporation of Virginia, 919 E. Main Street, Suite 615, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

Sincerely,

Sharon Nelson
President

LSCV VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION

Enclosed is my contribution of \$ _____ , which I understand is tax deductible.

Name

VSF I.D. Number

Address

Address

City, State Zip

DO NOT send to VSB

Please return your check made payable to:
Legal Services Corporation of Virginia
919 E. Main Street, Suite 615
Richmond, VA 23219

For questions, please contact:
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