



NEW JERSEY STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

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Governor Chris Christie
Office of the Governor
Post Office Box 001
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

Dear Governor Christie:

As you consider the FY2018 budget that has been approved by the Legislature, I urge you to maintain Legal Services funding for the protection of thousands of low-income New Jersey residents who rely on this valuable resource. The New Jersey State Bar Association (NJSBA) and its more than 18,000 lawyers, judges, law students and other legal professionals ask this of you today.

A cut to Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ) means it would have to turn away thousands of New Jersey's most vulnerable citizens seeking protections from domestic violence, predatory lenders, unlawful evictions, and wrongful denials of public assistance. These citizens depend on LSNJ attorneys to keep them from falling prey to injustice, simply because they can't afford a lawyer.

The NJSBA knows the value of Legal Services firsthand, and our members work tirelessly to supplement the hard work of that organization. We recently saw the value of providing legal assistance when our members met with hundreds of residents in Hudson County who needed the aid of an attorney but could not afford one. There is a demonstrable need for these legal services and LSNJ is at the heart of providing those services, especially at a time when the Legal Services Corporation, the organization's other major source of substantial funding, is facing elimination in Washington.

The *pro bono* activity facilitated by this critical legal aid funding is exactly the kind of public-private partnership the government should encourage – not eliminate. Now is not the time to cut funding to the state's most fragile in light of the fact that its population is growing. For these reasons, we urge you not to cut LSNJ funding.

Thank you for your consideration of this very critical issue that goes to the basic needs of the resident of our state and the function of our government.

Respectfully yours,

Robert B. Hille, Esq.
President

cc: Angela C. Scheck, Executive Director
Senator Paul Sarlo, Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee
Assemblyman Gary S. Schaer, Assembly Budget Committee