HBA/HBF/HVL Joint Resolution Supporting the Continuation of Funding for the Legal Services Corporation

WHEREAS, the proposed federal budget for Fiscal Year 2018 includes zero funding for the Legal Services Corporation (LSC).

WHEREAS, the Houston Bar Association, Houston Bar Foundation, and Houston Volunteer Lawyers embrace the principle that our nation promises justice for all, not just for those who can afford to pay for it, and subscribe to the belief that all persons deserve fair and equitable access to our justice system.

WHEREAS, LSC is the single largest funder of civil legal aid for low-income Americans in the nation. Established in 1974, LSC operates as an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation that promotes equal access to justice and provides grants for high-quality civil legal assistance to low-income Americans. LSC grantees provide legal aid services to 812 offices throughout the United States and its territories.

WHEREAS, the boards of directors of the Houston Bar Association, the Houston Bar Foundation and the Houston Volunteer Lawyers are concerned about the proposed elimination of funding and its effect on providing critical legal services to those in need in Houston, the State of Texas, and the nation.

WHEREAS, funding for LSC helps secure access to justice for low-income persons throughout Texas, including veterans, the elderly, disaster survivors, women, and children.

WHEREAS, the elimination of funding to the LSC offices in Texas, which includes Lone Star Legal Aid and grants to the Houston Volunteer Lawyers and AVDA, would have devastating consequences.

WHEREAS, without LSC and its funding to Texas legal aid offices, our citizens’ access to justice would be severely impacted, ensuring that many of them would not receive representation for their legal needs.

THEREFORE, the boards of directors of the Houston Bar Association, Houston Bar Foundation, and Houston Volunteer Lawyers, joining bar associations across the country who recognize the severity and consequences of this proposed budget cut, urge that the LSC be funded to ensure equal access to justice for everyone.

Adopted this 20th day of April 2017.