

State of
Washington
House of
Representatives



March 4, 2015

Hon. Frank Chopp
Speaker
House of Representatives

Hon. Ross Hunter
Chair
House Appropriations Committee

Hon. Pat Sullivan
Majority Leader
House of Representatives

Hon. Zack Hudgins
Chair
General Government Committee

FY 2015-17 Funding for Office of Civil Legal Aid

Dear Colleagues:

We respectfully request full funding of the \$3.6 million budget request for civil legal aid services submitted by the Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA).

Our state-funded civil legal aid system is stretched to the limit. Only 82.5 full-time-equivalent legal aid attorneys are currently available to serve more than one million low-income Washingtonians who seek legal aid each year. These attorneys have helped low-income clients to defend against foreclosure and eviction; to protect them from domestic abusers; to champion their rights against discrimination in the workplace; to shield them from predatory lending and illegal collection practices; and to secure their rights to veterans' benefits, health care, nutritional assistance, mental health treatment, vocational assistance and other critical and necessary supports.

The vast majority of low-income Washingtonians do not have a meaningful opportunity to defend their legal rights. Many do not even know of their basic legal rights, and most cannot get the legal help they need to assert those rights. Meanwhile, those who violate the rights of low-income people continue with impunity, knowing there is little chance that they will be caught or held accountable.

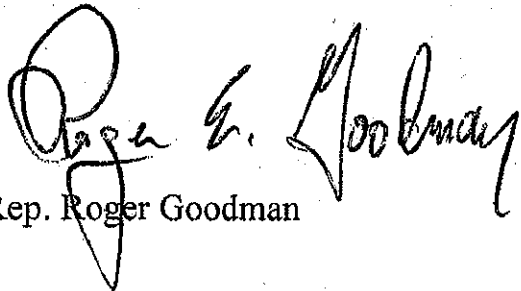
Fairness and justice are important guideposts for the House Democratic Caucus in developing our policy and budget priorities. As we work to craft a budget that meets our constitutional and legal responsibilities, we ask that you support OCLA's budget request

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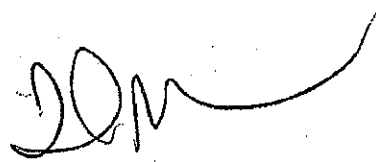
of \$3.6 million for FY 2015-17, which will help us ensure fair treatment of our most vulnerable and will help promote fairness and justice for all.

Thank you for your favorable consideration.

Yours sincerely,



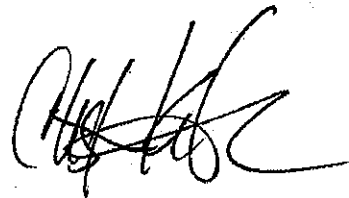
Rep. Roger Goodman



Rep. Laurie Jenkins




Rep. Tina Orwall



Rep. Christine Kilduff



Rep. Reuven Carlyle



Rep. Steve Kirby



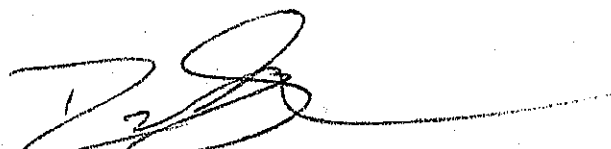
Rep. Tana Senn



Rep. Drew Hansen



Rep. Brady Walkinshaw



Rep. David Sawyer