

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD
HOUSE SPEECHES AND INSERTS
July 25, 2014

HONORING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2014

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, Friday, July 25, marks the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Legal Services Corporation (LSC). In 1974, Congress, with bipartisan support, established LSC to be a major source of funding for civil legal aid in this country. LSC is a private, nonprofit corporation, funded by Congress, as well as by state, local, and private contributions, with the mission to ensure equal access to justice under the law for all Americans by providing civil legal assistance to those who otherwise would be unable to afford it. LSC distributes nearly 94 percent of its annual Federal appropriations to 134 local legal aid programs, with nearly 800 offices serving every congressional district and U.S. territories.

LSC-funded legal aid programs make a crucial difference to millions of Americans by assisting with the most basic civil legal needs, such as addressing matters involving safety, subsistence, and family stability. These low-income Americans are women seeking protection from abuse, mothers trying to obtain child support, families facing unlawful evictions or foreclosures that could leave them homeless, veterans seeking their duly-earned benefits, seniors defending against consumer scams, and individuals who have lost their jobs and need help in applying for unemployment compensation and other benefits.

In my district, LSC provides funding to California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA), an organization that served 27,000 individuals, and recovered over \$2.5 million dollars for their low-income clients, in 2012. CRLA serves a wide array of clients, such as farmworkers, individuals with disabilities, immigrant populations, school children, lesbian/gay/bisexual and transgender populations, seniors, and individuals with limited English proficiency. Nearly 60 percent of CRLA clients are women. It is crucial that we continue to provide adequate funding to LSC so organizations like CRLA can provide these essential services.

In my role as a senior member of the Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Subcommittee, I have fought to increase LSC funding, and have sought to remove federal restrictions on how LSC can use state, local, and private funds to more efficiently use the resources it has available to serve low-income clients. I will continue to work to provide LSC with the resources and flexibility it needs to ensure equal access to justice. On this 40th anniversary, I salute the Legal Services Corporation, and LSC-funded attorneys, for the vital work they do every day on behalf of Americans who need qualified counsel.