

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD
SENATE SPEECHES AND INSERTS
July 24, 2014

LEGAL SERVICE CORPORATION'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I wish to recognize the 40th anniversary of the Legal Services Corporation, LSC, which falls on Friday, July 25.

Established with bipartisan support in 1974, LSC is a private, nonprofit corporation funded by Congress that aims to provide access to civil legal assistance to Americans who would otherwise be unable to afford it. LSC is a major source of funding for civil legal aid in this country and distributes over 90 percent of its annual Federal appropriation to over 130 local legal aid programs and close to 800 offices across every congressional district and territory.

Millions of Americans rely upon LSC-funded programs each year for help with their most basic civil legal needs. Every day, LSC-funded programs help low-income individuals and families fight illegal evictions, safeguard their financial health, and secure their veterans benefits. In my home State of Washington, LSC-backed programs have been helping survivors of the Oso mudslide get back up on their feet and rebuild their lives.

LSC-funded services are especially important for women across the country. Over 70 percent of legal aid clients are women and one-third of LSC-eligible cases involve family law issues such as domestic abuse, child support, and child custody.

Today, the need for LSC-supported programs and attorneys has never been greater. According to the Census Bureau, nearly one in five Americans qualifies for LSC-funded services. Yet recent studies show that due to financial constraints legal aid offices are forced to turn away more than half of the eligible individuals coming to them for help. As we mark this anniversary, I applaud the efforts of LSC, the programs and services funded by the corporation, and ask that we commit ourselves to ensuring that Americans of all backgrounds have access to adequate legal services. LSC is essential to protecting the lives and liberty of the most vulnerable Americans. We are a better nation for its 40 years of service and advocacy on their behalf.