

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

February 26, 2004

The Honorable Frank R. Wolf
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State, and the Judiciary
Committee on Appropriations
241 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Wolf:

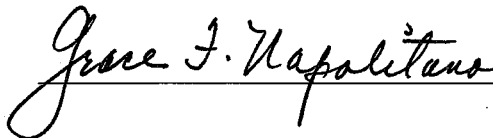
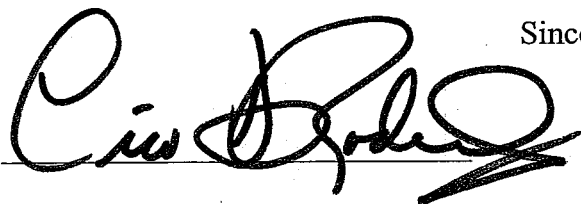
We would like to commend you for your efforts to secure additional funding for the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) in the 2004 Commerce, Justice, State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill (CJS). We share your commitment to provide affordable legal services to our country's most vulnerable.

As you know, LSC was established by Congress 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. We are concerned with the provision in the CJS Appropriations bill that restricts the use of private and other non-federal funds by independent legal services providers. This "private money restriction" currently prohibits \$300 million annually in non-federal funds from being used to provide critical legal assistance to our society's most vulnerable individuals and families.

As members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, we represent the largest and fastest growing minority group in the United States. Many in the Hispanic community depend on LSC funds. LSC grantees work on cases relating to issues such as domestic violence, child custody and visitation rights, evictions, access to health care, unemployment and disability claims as well as other issues. According to client demographics, Hispanics comprise almost 30% of LSC's workload. It is essential that LSC have all the tools it needs to provide low-income Americans with access to legal assistance.

We urge the Committee on Appropriations to revisit the private money restriction when it is considered in the 2005 CJS Appropriations bill. We look forward to working with you in our shared vision towards providing affordable legal services to our country's most vulnerable.

Sincerely,



Walter J. Davis

Joe Brown

Walter J. Davis

Walter J. Davis

Ruben Hingora

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Lincoln J. Simons

Walter J. Davis

Walter J. Davis

Raul M. Hijalva

Solomon B. Ortiz

Robert Menard

Walter J. Davis

D. C. C. C.

Members Signing On

Ciro D. Rodriguez
Grace Napolitano
Hilda Solis
Charles Gonzalez
Joe Baca
Luis V. Gutierrez
Nydia V. Velasquez
Raul M. Grijalva
Anibal Acevedo Vila
Solomon Ortiz
Ruben Hinojosa
Robert Menendez
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Xavier Becerra
Linda Sanchez
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