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November 30, 2004

VIA FACSIMILE

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
Facsimile. 202.225.0437

The Honorable José E. Serrano
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State, and the Judiciary
Committee on Appropriations
2227 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
Facsimile. 202.225.6001

Dear Chairman Wolf and Congressman Serrano,

On behalf of the Asian American community and the undersigned organizations and in partnership with the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law's National Campaign to Repeal the Legal Services Corporation's Private Money Restriction, we greatly appreciate your efforts to secure funding for the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) in the 2005 Commerce, Justice, State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies (CJS) Appropriations bill. We share your commitment to the federal government's provision of affordable legal services to our country's neediest families.

We write today because we are increasingly concerned about a provision in the CJS Appropriations bill that severely restricts the use of private, state and local funds by nonprofit legal services providers that receive LSC funds. This "private money restriction" encumbers more than \$300 million annually in non-federal funds that otherwise would be available to provide critical forms of legal assistance to many of our society's most vulnerable members, particularly the immigrant community.

The LSC private money restriction imposes particular hardships on low-income Asian Americans, who are part of the fastest growing minority group in the nation. More than 60 percent of the members of the Asian American community are immigrants; and a significant portion, including many in refugee communities, is low-income. These individuals and families have an enormous and pressing need

AFFILIATES

Los Angeles
Asian Pacific American
Legal Center

San Francisco
Asian Law Caucus

for linguistically accessible legal assistance on a variety of common legal problems – including those involving domestic violence, healthcare, housing, labor, immigration, education, and discrimination matters – that is often unavailable because of the LSC private money restriction. And this need has only worsened due to the increase in discrimination against certain Asian American communities that persists in the wake of the terrible 9/11 attacks on our nation.

We urge you to continue your leadership on behalf of America's families by guiding efforts to end this unfairness as the provisions of the 2005 CJS Appropriations bill are considered in further budget discussions this year. Later this week, members of the Brennan Center's Coalition with legal services program experience will be visiting with members on the hill for the Brennan Center's Education Day in an effort to provide a local community's perspective on the harsh ramifications of the LSC private money restriction. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Juliet Choi of the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium (NAPALC). Her telephone is 202-296-2300 x124, and her email is jchoi@napalc.org.

Again, thank you for your leadership, and we look forward to working with you on this issue.

Very Sincerely Yours,

National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium (NAPALC)
Washington, DC

National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA)
Washington, DC

Asian Law Alliance
San Jose, California

Asian Law Caucus (ALC)
San Francisco, California

Hmong American Partnership
St. Paul, Minnesota

Cambodian Association of Illinois
Chicago, Illinois

Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA)
Washington, DC

Southeast Asian Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Washington, DC

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)
New York City, New York

Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC)
Los Angeles, California

National CAPACD
(Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development)
Washington, DC

Small Farms Resource and Training Center
Fresno, California

Southeast Asian Assistance Center
Sacramento, California