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Domestic Violence Advocates Demand Officials Reject Elimination of Legal Help for Victims

Madison — Today, advocates for victims of domestic violence around Wisconsin are calling on their elected officials at both the state and federal level to protect funding for civil legal services. Stunned by reports that President Trump intends to adopt a budget plan that calls for the full elimination of funding for the Legal Services Corporation (LSC), advocates are informing their Wisconsin and US Representatives of the importance of legal aid for victims of domestic violence, low-income citizens and many other vulnerable populations.

“Reports that the Trump administration intends to fully eliminate a program that directly aids victims in communities across the country is as shocking as it is appalling,” said Patti Seger, Executive Director of End Domestic Abuse WI. “The LSC is the largest single provider of legal aid for low-income citizens in this country, providing as much as 50% of the funding for programs like Legal Action of WI and WI Judicare. The importance of these services for victims in all communities cannot be overstated. Whether seeking employment, resolving housing issues or advocating for their children in the family law system, having access to affordable legal aid is paramount to a victim’s ability to protect themselves and their children, especially while coping with extreme trauma at the hands of their abuser, as is so often the case.

"Any attempts to eliminate America’s principled commitment to supporting domestic violence survivors and other marginalized communities is irresponsible and shameful,” continued Seger. “End Abuse and member programs across the state call on our elected officials in WI to recognize the importance of civil legal aid for victims of domestic violence, and to protect funding for these critical services that victims across the country rely on.”

President Trump’s proposal, which is yet to be officially introduced and would need to pass in both houses of Congress before becoming law, would reverse decades of progress toward providing legal services that save lives and empower marginalized groups all across the country.

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End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin: The Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence is the leading voice for victims of domestic abuse in Wisconsin. At End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin, we educate shelter and program volunteers and advocates, law enforcement, legislators, and community members to provide safety and support to survivors. We strive to shift Wisconsin from the attitudes and beliefs that cause domestic violence to values of mutual respect and equality, and we partner with communities in the effort to prevent and end domestic abuse. We encourage reporters to include the National Domestic Violence Hotline number [1-800-799-SAFE(7233)] in their stories for victims who need help. A list of local Wisconsin domestic violence victim service providers can be found at <http://www.endabusewi.org>.