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Justice for All in Peril without Allocation for Legal Aid, Says LWV-TX

(Austin, TX) LWV-TX calls on the Texas Legislature to include the funding for Texas Legal Aid programs requested by the Texas Supreme Court in the Texas budget.

“For the rule of law to have meaning in Texas, everyone must have access to the civil justice system” according to Karen Nicholson, President of LWV-TX. “If the Texas Legislature fails to include funding for Legal Aid in the budget, the “justice for all” we proudly proclaim in the Pledge of Allegiance becomes an empty promise,” she goes on to say.

Well over 5 million low-income Texans qualify for, and are in need of basic civil legal services. Victims of domestic violence, veterans denied promised benefits or services, and families facing unlawful eviction all rely on Legal Aid programs for access to justice.

The requested funding is not to compensate lawyers but instead is used to sustain programs that match those who need legal assistance with staff and volunteer lawyers who provide representation. The Interest on Lawyer Trust Account program, known as IOLTA, had been a primary source of Legal Aid funding for many years, but that source is not sufficient as bank interest rates are now close to zero.

If we are to have justice for all in Texas, Nicholson believes it is essential that the budget passed by the Texas Legislature include the funding for Legal Aid requested by Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Wallace B. Jefferson and Justice Nathan L. Hecht.

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