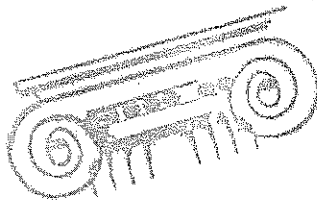


From the desk of  
*Arnie Kohl*



THE LAWYERS'  
CAMPAIGN for EQUAL JUSTICE

**Supplement funding for legal aid with residual class action funds.**

- **Civil legal aid ensures fairness in the justice system.** It provides vital help to low-income and vulnerable Oregonians to protect their livelihoods, their health and safety and their families. About 40% of legal aid's cases are in the area of family law, and almost all involve domestic violence.
- **Civil legal aid is a critical information resource for Oregonians that can't afford to hire a lawyer.** Through easy-to-understand forms; legal assistance or representation; and legal self-help—people can know their rights and how to protect them. This also helps civil legal aid streamline the court system and cut down on court costs.
- **Access to civil legal services reduces domestic violence, strengthens families and creates opportunity for long term safety and self-sufficiency.** It also helps create respect for our justice system. CEJ supports increased funding for these important programs.
- **There is a justice gap in Oregon and it is estimated that legal aid has resources to meet about 15% of the legal needs of the poor.** Between 2000 and 2011, the eligible poverty population in Oregon increased by 61.5%. Between 2009 and 2012, resources for legal aid declined, causing a 20% reduction in staff and the closure of 2 offices.
- **Oregon's legal aid programs receive support from over 80 sources of public and private funding.** Ensuring stable, adequate funding will require a multi-pronged approach. Many states use unclaimed class action awards for this purpose and Oregon should join them. The 2014 Task Force on Legal Aid Funding concluded that in order to close the justice gap, legal aid will need increased revenue from existing sources of funding, and also follow other states in locating other funding sources. Cy pres is one such example of what other states do to supplement legal aid funding.
- **HB 2700 allows residual funds from class action lawsuits and dedicates those funds to support legal aid and other non-profits.**

**For the above reasons, CEJ respectfully urges your yes vote in support of HB 2700.**

## Legal aid helps prevent homelessness by providing advice to Oregonians impacted by foreclosure.

"Flora LittleDove" and her husband Joe have owned a 2 bedroom, 1 bathroom home for over 35 years. Their two children grew up there and Flora, who is now in her late sixties, expects to live out the rest of her life in "her own space on this earth." Flora is battling cancer. To cover surgeries, they made the tough choice to refinance their home. Unfortunately, a few weeks later, Joe was laid off from his job. When the couple was unable to cover the higher mortgage, the bank began foreclosure proceedings. Flora had little energy to face the stress of losing her home. At the last moment, Flora turned to legal aid for help. "One of the best things was that I did not feel alone. When I could not get answers, legal aid did. They helped me carry the burden and stress." Because of legal aid's help, Flora and Joe have manageable payments and are able to stay in their home.



## In nearly 60% of domestic violence cases, children see or hear violence in the home. Witnessing violence has a significant negative impact on children.

"Claudia" and her 5 year old son, "Ryan", were living with "Chris", Ryan's father. Chris would frequently yell and act aggressively. Claudia was concerned about the effect this was having on Ryan — he was so afraid of loud noises that he would cling to her legs when Chris was screaming at her. Then, after disappearing for over a week, Chris returned to the apartment with a pick up truck saying that he was leaving Claudia and wanted his belongings. Claudia let him in, but she was afraid that he would hurt her or take Ryan when he left. The next day Chris returned again and this time began to take items that didn't belong to him. Claudia locked him out and called the police, fearing for her safety. Claudia also called legal aid. Legal aid helped Claudia file a restraining order. Once the restraining order was granted, Claudia stopped hearing from Chris. She and Ryan feel safe.



## Over 80% of legal aid's clients are women, most of them with children to support.



"Lynette" is a 44 year old busy single mom of a 17 year old daughter. When she had difficulty breathing and started to have chest pains, she went to the hospital where she was admitted to the intensive care unit. She needed oxygen and breathing treatments and then was able to return home. Lynette was low-income and covered under the Oregon Health Plan and thought that would take care of the bill. She was surprised when she got a bill from the hospital and later a collections agency saying that some of the treatments weren't covered. Lynette's income covered her rent, utilities and groceries, with almost nothing left over and it would have been impossible to pay the hospital bill and stay current on other bills. She called legal aid, and the attorney worked things out with the hospital. Lynette said, "Legal aid was a godsend to me and I'm not sure what I would have done if they hadn't been there to help."

## Over 80% of legal aid's cases are resolved with brief advice and service.



Nine year old "Celine" was dropped off for a weekend with her grandmother, Victoria. On Sunday, Celine's mom did not return for her. As the weeks stretched into months, Victoria realized that Celine's mom wasn't coming back. Celine had no legal guardian to sign important papers, including consent to medical care. When Victoria went to enroll Celine in school, she was

turned away. The school put Victoria in touch with legal aid. Legal aid helped Victoria go through the process of trying to find Celine's parents. They put notices in papers and sent letters to old addresses, but they got no response. Legal aid then prepared a "relative caregiver affidavit" naming Victoria Celine's legal guardian, a process that was made possible by a new Oregon law. With the guardianship approved, Celine is able to get medical care and is enrolled in school— thanks to legal aid's help.

