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Betsy Butler

March 27, 2016

The Honorable Nora Campos
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee 5
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Increase the Equal Access Fund (Item #250) – Support

Dear Assemblymember Campos:

On behalf of the California Women's Law Center (CWLC), I am writing in support of increasing the Equal Access Fund in the California Court budget. The EAF is an important partnership between the courts and legal aid to bring critically-needed funding to local legal aid providers.

EAF funding has been stagnant since 1999, despite the increasing numbers of Californians living in poverty. At this time the EAF funding is not sufficient to provide legal services to even one-third of California's poor and lower-income residents. Millions of Californians are unrepresented in civil court proceedings. As a result, many Californians are unable to obtain meaningful access to the courts. Even if they take advantage of California's self-help services, the burden of self-representation is too great and many low-income individuals are simply unable to navigate the court system successfully and present meritorious legal arguments on their own.

Since its founding in 1989, CWLC has worked to break down barriers and advance the potential of women and girls through transformative litigation, policy advocacy, and education. CWLC receives a portion of funding from the EAF. Therefore, without this funding, CWLC cannot provide comprehensive legal assistance that addresses the unique needs of women and girls across California. An increase to EAF's funding will allow CWLC to broaden the scope of our representation particularly with woman veterans.

The CWLC strongly supports increasing the EAF which will ensure that children, families, and low-income people in California will have access to legal services.

Sincerely,



Betsy Butler
Executive Director

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The Honorable Phil Ting
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Increase the Equal Access Fund (Item #250) – Support

Dear Assemblymember Ting:

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Betsy Butler
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