



Association of Corporate Counsel

Northeast Chapter

12 Edgemere Road, Marblehead, MA 01945

May 19, 2009

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The Honorable Therese Murray  
Senate President  
State House, Room 332  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear President Murray,

On behalf of the Northeast Chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC), I strongly urge you to support level funding in FY10 for civil legal aid in budget line item 0321-1600, the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation (MLAC). While it is clear that the Commonwealth faces unprecedented economic difficulties, it is also clear that civil legal aid is already taking a disproportionate cut, just as the demand for assistance is increasing.

As you know, the Senate Ways and Means Committee proposed a 46% cut to the MLAC line item. Since the decline in the housing market and the federal funds rate has caused the other source of funding for civil legal aid, the Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts (IOLTA) program, to plummet, the magnitude of this 46% cut is truly devastating. The figure proposed by the Committee, combined with the IOLTA reductions and the depletion of MLAC reserves, would result in MLAC cutting General Support grants in FY10 by **85%** compared to those made in FY08.

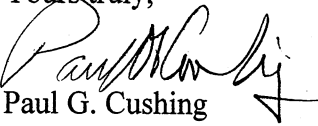
Access to justice for all is fundamental to our judicial system and to our civil society. The imbalance created when only one side is represented in court, especially in critical matters such as housing, child custody and health care, undermines our system of justice. The proposed cut to the MLAC line item will decimate the Commonwealth's delivery of legal services to the poor and undercut the promise of equal justice for all.

ACC is the largest national bar association comprised solely of attorneys who practice in the legal departments of corporations and other private sector organizations. Since its founding in 1982, ACC has grown to more than 23,000 members serving over 10,000 organizations. ACC's Northeast Chapter has over 900 members in Massachusetts, working in more than 450 corporations and other private sector enterprises.

Honorable Therese Murray  
May 19, 2009  
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I urge you to join us in supporting level funding (\$11,070,424.00) for FY 2010 for the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul G. Cushing". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and a stylized "C".

Paul G. Cushing  
President