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Media Contact:
Mike Murray (608) 251-0139 x3

Women's Health Advocates Demand Elected Officials Reject Elimination of Legal Help for Low-Income Women and Families

Madison — As an organization that advocates for public policies that promote the health, wellbeing, and economic security of women and girls in Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health (WAWH) is calling on Wisconsin's state and federal elected officials to protect funding for civil legal services. WAWH was greatly disappointed and alarmed 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), which provides thousands of low-income women in Wisconsin with access to the legal services they need for their economic security and often times for their personal safety.

"Reports that the Trump administration intends to fully eliminate a program that directly aids vulnerable, low-income women, such as victims of domestic violence, in communities across the country is appalling," said Sara Finger, WAWH Executive Director. "If LSC services were to disappear or be diminished in Wisconsin, many of these women would have nowhere to turn for legal representation. There are no other agencies in Wisconsin that could feasibly fill the critical role played by LSC grantees in our civil legal system. What this means in reality is that there will be low-income women and their children who find themselves in incredibly vulnerable and even dangerous situations who are left to fend for themselves in complex and overwhelming legal proceedings."

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 Wisconsin and Wisconsin Judicare. Low-income women in communities across Wisconsin rely on LSC-funded services when seeking employment, resolving housing issues, or advocating for their children in the family law system. The importance of having access to affordable legal aid services to navigate these often complicated legal issues is only further magnified in cases involving domestic violence.

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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The vision of the Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health (WAWH) is an environment in which all Wisconsin women, at every stage and every stage of their life, can realize their optimal health, safety and economic security. Visit www.supportwomenshealth.org.