

Law Day 2023: Message from John G. Levi, Chairman, Legal Services Corporation

John Levi

Every year on May 1, Americans observe Law Day, marking the country's commitment to the rule of law.

That commitment is the foundation of our democracy, and this year's Law Day theme, "Cornerstones of Democracy: Civics, Civility, and Collaboration" suggests ways to ensure that this foundation remains strong.

The mission of the Legal Services Corporation since its founding in 1974 to provide "equal access to the system of justice" also strengthens this core value. Respect for the rule of law requires that all have access to justice.

This mission is especially vital given that LSC's recent Justice Gap study found that low-income Americans received no or inadequate legal help for a staggering 92% of all the civil legal problems that impacted them substantially. As a result, far too many of our countrymen don't fully trust the civil justice system. Of those surveyed in the study, only 28% agreed that people like them are treated fairly.

This mistrust of the justice system represents a substantial threat to our society since respect for the law is the true cornerstone of democracy, as President Joe Biden observed last year:

"That reverence is essential to our democracy. Without it, equality and justice cannot be advanced, human rights cannot be protected, democratic norms and values cannot be secured, and disagreements cannot be peaceably resolved. The rule of law has also been a critical vehicle for delivering the full promise of American democracy to all of our people, particularly those excluded in our Nation's founding."

Abraham Lincoln observed that mob violence and other social unrest can best be countered by cultivating such respect for the law:

"Let reverence for the laws, be breathed by every American mother, to the lisping babe, that prattles on her lap — let it be taught in schools, in seminaries, and in colleges; let it be written in primers, spelling books, and in almanacs; — let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in legislative halls, and enforced in courts of justice."

On this Law Day, let us secure our democracy and the rule of law by redoubling our commitment to our country's foundational promise to provide equal access to justice for all.

[Legal Services Corporation \(LSC\)](#) is an independent nonprofit established by Congress in 1974 to provide financial support for civil legal aid to low-income Americans. The Corporation currently provides funding to 132 independent nonprofit legal aid programs in every state, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories.

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Table of Contents

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6 Feb 2026

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