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East Texas Legal Services, Inc.

February 7, 2001

Ms. Randi Youells
Vice-President for Programs
LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION
750 First Street, N.E., 11th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20002-4250

Re: Configuration of LSC Funded Programs in Texas

Dear Randi:

After briefly reporting to you on January 22, 2001 concerning the outcome of the Texas Legal Services State Planning Committee for the Delivery of Legal Services to the Poor meeting on January 20, 2001, I am writing to give you a more detailed review of the meeting. I have also attached the reference materials we reviewed at the meeting.

As you know, since our November 06, 2000 meeting with LSC and LSC's November 20, 2000 memo and accompanying configuration maps, the Texas Project Directors met in November and December to discuss the configuration issue. Since that time, Project Directors from the various regions in Texas also met to discuss configuration within those regions. We invited all major stakeholders and equal justice partners to the January 20, 2001 meeting. All Texas Project Directors and representatives from all major stakeholders and equal justice partners within the state attended the meeting.

At this meeting, discussion focused on the maps and information provided in the PowerPoint attachment (Texas State Planning Configuration Review). We discussed the two LSC configuration maps and maps A, B, C, D, and E, as well as a one program map during the course of the meeting. The PowerPoint review presented information regarding poverty population, attorney population, current resource development, and current provision of legal services by service area.

The discussion regarding each particular map focused on the factors set out in your November 20, 2000 memo. Towards the end of the day, votes were taken on all the maps presented. At the conclusion of the day, map A, a three program map with Northwest Texas, Southwest Texas, and East Texas regions received a unanimous endorsement by all Committee members present. Although some members of the Committee earlier voiced preference for various other maps, everyone joined together in a spirit of cooperation to unanimously endorse Map A.

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The materials attached to this memo, in particular the PowerPoint Texas State Planning Committee Configuration Review, have been circulated to Legal Services Programs in the state, interested individuals, equal justice partners, and stakeholders. You may receive feedback directly from them. Some concern has been raised that particular county assignments in the map might cause disruption to existing service networks within branch offices boundary lines where changed in this map. The consensus of the State Planning Committee is that the Committee's work recommending a configuration of programs in Texas is complete, and that these particular boundary lines can be reviewed at a later date and the matter taken up if it appears clients are adversely affected.

The State Planning Committee's unanimous consensus to recommend Map A to LSC as the model to achieve a concerted, coherent, closely coordinated legal assistance delivery system in Texas represents the interests of the nine Legal Services Programs in the state, other stakeholders and equal justice partners in Texas. We believe the map we have recommended to you could be the foundation for creating a world-class legal services delivery system in Texas.

The State Planning Committee, previously in its reports and meetings, has endorsed all the remaining components of State Planning, such as the use of technology to increase access and enhance services to all clients, a commitment to raise additional funds for legal services, to provide a full range of legal services to all clients within the state, and to develop a permanent state civil equal justice community. The Committee continues to endorse them in this report.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

PAUL E. FURRH, JR.

Chairman, Texas Legal Services State Planning
Committee for the Delivery of Legal Services to
the Poor

PEF:rc

Attachments: *Reference materials reviewed at the meeting*
PowerPoint (Texas State Planning Committee Configuration Review)
Map A and details
Map and Memo from Errol Summerlin

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cc: Brendan E. Gill, Bexar County Legal Aid Association
Errol Summerlin, Coastal Bend Legal Services
Jaime Sanchez, El Paso Legal Assistance Society
Dwayne Bilton, Gulf Coast Legal Foundation
Regina Rogoff, Legal Aid of Central Texas
Jonathan Vickery, Legal Services of North Texas
David Hall, Texas Rural Legal Aid, Inc.
Jesse Gaines, West Texas Legal Services
The Honorable Deborah Hankinson
The Honorable Lora Livingston
Antonio Alvarado, State Bar of Texas
Julie Oliver, Texas Lawyers Care
John R. Jones
Randy Chapman, Texas Legal Services Center
Jim Comstock-Gallagan, Advocacy, Inc.