



87 Bayard Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901  
Telephone: (732) 828-3433  
Fax: (732) 828-5862  
Website: www.mcbalaw.com  
Email: info@mcbalaw.com

2009-10 Term

June 3, 2009

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Hon. Jon S. Corzine  
Governor, State of New Jersey  
Office of the Governor  
P.O. Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Corzine:

On behalf of the Middlesex County Bar Association please accept this letter and attached resolution to express our support of Legal Services of New Jersey seeking the State of New Jersey to provide additional support (\$17 million) to Legal Services of New Jersey.

Respectfully yours,

*Edward J. Rebenack*

EDWARD J. REBENACK  
President

Enclosure

cc: All Middlesex County Legislators  
Legal Services of New Jersey  
Central Jersey Legal Services Corporation  
New Jersey State Bar Association  
All New Jersey County Bar Associations  
New Jersey Law Journal  
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## MIDDLESEX COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

WHEREAS, Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ) is the state's system for providing free legal assistance in civil cases to low-income New Jerseyans; and

WHEREAS, LSNJ consists of a web of seven nonprofit corporations, serving all 21 counties; and

WHEREAS, LSNJ faces a financial challenge of historic proportions, having lost more than half its core funding, \$37 million out of \$73 million, as a result of the dramatic decline of the IOLTA program; and

WHEREAS, because the Legislature and the Governor have provided substantial funding through an increased annual and two supplemental appropriations last year, and because of substantial efforts LSNJ has made to reduce expenditures, LSNJ will be able to get to this June 30 without the worst of the staff and service cuts that were anticipated; and

WHEREAS, in State Fiscal Year 2010, LSNJ faces a calamitous situation as reserves and one-time strategies of reprogramming funds will be exhausted; and

WHEREAS, for FY 2010, even taking into account modest increases from the federal government and a recent change in the design of the IOLTA program to set a floor to their rates, LSNJ still faces a \$17 million budget shortfall; and

WHEREAS, the order of magnitude of this shortfall far exceeds that suffered by other key government agencies involved in the justice system; and

WHEREAS, the collapse in LSNJ revenue has occurred at a time when the civil legal needs of low-income people have exploded due to the State and national recession; and

WHEREAS, while in 2008 LSNJ opened 67,000 cases, an all-time record, it still could serve only approximately twenty percent of low-income New Jerseyans seeking assistance with civil legal problems; and

WHEREAS, many low-income people seek assistance with fundamental human needs, and this economic crisis has given rise to an explosion in the number and breath of cases, which include evictions, foreclosures, unemployment insurance problems, welfare, consumer collections and domestic violence, for example; and



## MIDDLESEX COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

Support Legal Services Resolution

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WHEREAS, for each one million dollars of funding lost by LSNJ, at least 1,100 fewer clients will be served and at least ten full-time staff will be lost, just at a time when client need is most extreme; and

WHEREAS, we respectfully urge the Legislature and the Governor to support an appropriation for LSNJ of \$17 million from the General Fund for FY2010 to ensure access to justice for those living in poverty in New Jersey;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Middlesex County Bar Association endorses this resolution and urges the Legislature and the Governor to act with all deliberate speed to provide LSNJ with a \$17 million appropriation from the General Fund for FY2010.

By: *Edward J. Rebenack*

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EDWARD J. REBENACK

President, Middlesex County Bar Association

Dated: June 3, 2009