

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING FUNDING FOR CIVIL LEGAL AID IN TEXAS**

WHEREAS, Tarrant County Bar Association, embraces the principles that our nation promises justice for all, not just for those who can afford to pay for it and subscribes to the values Judge Learned Hand espoused when he said “If we are to keep our democracy, there must be one commandment; Thou shalt not ration justice”;

WHEREAS, the Preamble to the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct states that “Every lawyer, regardless of professional prominence or professional workload, should find time to participate in or otherwise support the provision of legal services to the disadvantaged. The provision of free legal services to those unable to pay reasonable fees is a moral obligation of each lawyer as well as the profession generally.”;

WHEREAS, the most recent U.S. Census reports that more than 5.7 million Texans qualify for civil legal aid to the poor;

WHEREAS, low-income Texans are often the most vulnerable in our communities, including the elderly, persons with disabilities, veterans, and victims of domestic abuse; and for many disadvantaged Texans access to legal help might be all that stands between them and homelessness, safety and income providing food on their table and shelter for their children;


WHEREAS, the Texas Access to Justice Foundation was created by Supreme Court Order in 1984 to administer the Interest on Lawyers’ Trust Accounts (IOLTA) program to fund nonprofit organizations that provide free civil legal services to low-income Texans and is the leading state funder for civil legal aid in Texas;

WHEREAS, historically low interest rates have dramatically reduced funding for the IOLTA program from \$20.1 million in 2007 to approximately \$4.4 million in 2012, and has created a more than 75 percent loss in funding for civil legal services since 2007;


WHEREAS, an additional annualized loss of \$6.1 million in federal funding for legal services occurred in 2012 with funding cuts to the Legal Services Corporation;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Tarrant County Bar Association supports the request of \$17.6 million for the biennium from the Texas Legislature to bridge the loss of IOLTA funding and supports additional funding for the direct provision of basic civil legal services by legal professionals to low-income people in this state.

SIGNED this 7<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2013.

  
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J. Benjamin Barlow, President

ATTEST:

  
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David E. Keltner, Secretary-Treasurer