



RESOLUTION SUPPORTING FUNDING FOR CIVIL LEGAL AID IN TEXAS

WHEREAS, The El Paso Bar Association, embraces the principles that our nation promises justice for all, not just for those who can afford to pay for it;

WHEREAS, the most recent U.S. Census reports that 3.9 million people live below the poverty level in Texas, and more than 5.1 million qualify for civil legal aid to the poor;

WHEREAS, Texas ranks ninth among the 50 United States in income inequality between the rich and the poor;

WHEREAS, Texas currently ranks 43rd in the nation in overall funding for legal services and there is an estimated one legal aid attorney for every 11,500 low income Texans;

WHEREAS, in 2007, more than 107,000 persons received urgent legal help from programs funded by the Texas Access to Justice Foundation;

WHEREAS, the Border region of Texas and Mexico, including El Paso County, has historically been the most economically disadvantaged area of Texas, with poverty rates that, in general exceed the state average, and in some cases, more than triple the poverty rate;

WHEREAS, in 2005, 29% of the El Paso population lived below the poverty level;

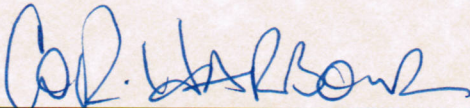
WHEREAS, the Texas Access to Justice Foundation was created by Supreme Court Order in 1984 to administer the Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA) program to fund nonprofit organizations that provide free civil legal aid to low-income Texans and is the leading state funder for civil legal aid in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

WHEREAS, the drop in interest rates has brought the IOLTA Program from \$20.1M in FY 2007 to \$12.2M in FY 2008 and is now estimated to drop to \$1.5M in FY 2010 and 2011 and would need \$37M for a Biennium to offset the anticipated shortfall;

WHEREAS, Texas Access to Justice Foundation has made a request to the Texas Legislature for \$37M from general revenue to offset the loss of IOLTA funds;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the El Paso Bar Association supports the Texas Access to Justice Foundation in its request to the Texas Legislature for \$37M from general revenue and requests such funds be allocated to bridge this loss of IOLTA funding.

SIGNED this 23rd day of March, 2009.



Cori Harbour, President
El Paso Bar Association