



American Bar Association  
**News Release**



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### **AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION TO HONOR STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN**

*Will receive award for its dedication to increase funding for the Legal Services Corporation*

WASHINGTON, D.C., April 9, 2012 — The State Bar of Michigan will receive the American Bar Association Grassroots Advocacy Award for its outstanding efforts to increase funding for the [Legal Services Corporation](#), which helps provide legal aid for low-income Americans. The award will be presented on April 18 during a reception at the United States Supreme Court.

With 63 million Americans—including 22 million children—qualifying for assistance, LSC is the nation's single largest provider of civil legal aid to citizens who live on incomes below or near the poverty line. Independent LSC-funded local programs, such as [Legal Services of Eastern Michigan](#), help meet the overwhelming legal needs of struggling families, veterans, disaster victims and the elderly, among others, in every state. In 2010, LSC-funded aid providers in [Michigan](#) closed nearly 27,315 cases including child custody matters, foreclosures and veterans claims.

Last year, the State Bar of Michigan played an exemplary role in advancing access to justice by successfully advocating for adequate funding for LSC during the congressional budget allocation for fiscal year 2012. The State Bar of Michigan advocated for LSC funding through an ongoing grassroots legislative advocacy campaign that included urging congressional members on the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction to push for increased LSC funding.

The State Bar of Michigan worked to prevent a potentially devastating \$104.2 million (25.7 percent) proposed cut to the LSC budget of \$404.2 million in fiscal year 2010. While the House of Representatives proposed funding LSC at \$300 million, the Senate favored an allocation of \$396 million. Ultimately, funding was set at \$348 million, thanks in large part to efforts such as the State Bar of Michigan's.

"The State Bar of Michigan is honored to be named a 2012 recipient of the ABA Grassroots Advocacy Award. We have a committed staff that works very hard to advance the bar's interests on the legislative front, and we value our relationship with the ABA when opportunities arise to work together on issues of mutual interest," said State Bar of Michigan President Julie Fershtman.

"The State Bar of Michigan has been at the front, leading on a variety of issues, including the effort to preserve funding for legal services. Their immense contributions on behalf of Michigan lawyers have strengthened our system of justice," said ABA President Wm. T. (Bill) Robinson III.

The State Bar of Michigan will receive one of the five ABA Grassroots Advocacy Awards that will be given as part of the ABA's annual effort to connect policymakers with constituents in the legal profession. [ABA Day 2012](#) brings distinguished lawyers from 50 states to Washington, D.C., to discuss issues such as funding for the Legal Services Corporation, the Violence Against Women Act, and the collection of overdue state court-ordered fees.

Other recipients of 2012 ABA Grassroots Advocacy Awards include George Cauthen, Nelson Mullins et al; L. Jonathan Ross, Primmer Piper Eggleston & Cramer PC; the Supreme Court of Texas; and Betty Balli Torres, Texas Access to Justice Foundation.

With nearly 400,000 members, the American Bar Association is the largest voluntary professional membership organization in the world. As the national voice of the legal profession, the ABA works to improve the administration of justice, promotes programs that assist lawyers and judges in their work, accredits law schools, provides continuing legal education, and works to build public

understanding around the world of the importance of the rule of law.

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