

Cruel Cuts for Struggling Families in the President's Proposed FY21 Budget

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 10, 2020

National Consumer Law Center contact: Jan Kruse (jkruse@nclc.org) or (617) 542-8010

Trump again calls for elimination of Legal Services Corp and home energy assistance; supports drastic cuts and changes to weaken the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

Washington – President Trump's proposed budget_ once again seeks to eliminate funding for programs that have bipartisan support and help rural households, elders, struggling families and veterans, according to advocates at the National Consumer Law Center. Additionally, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau would be severely weakened due to drastic cuts and changes to weaken its independence.

"Legal services programs serving urban and rural areas in every state around the country are there for veterans, seniors and struggling families when they need legal help to transition from military service, to save their homes from foreclosure, to protect the Social Security funds they need to buy food, or to stop domestic violence." **said Richard DuBois, executive director of the National Consumer Law Center.** In the words of the late Justice Antonin Scalia, the Legal Services Program 'pursues the most fundamental of American ideals, and it pursues equal justice in those areas of life most important to the lives of our citizens,'" **he added.**

The Legal Services Corporation (LSC) has broad bipartisan support, and the proposed elimination of LSC in previous Trump Administration budgets was opposed by the **heads of over 150 law firms** in all 50 states, **185 leaders of corporate legal departments**, the **Conference of Chief Justices**, and the **Conference of State Court Administrators.**

"The budget also proposes drastic cuts to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and changes that would weaken its independence from Wall Street lobbyists," **added Lauren Saunders, associate director of the National Consumer Law Center.**

The proposed budget, once again, would also eliminate the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), the low-income Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) and the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) program — three safety net programs that protect the health and safety of low-income families who have trouble paying their energy bills, and provide the core funding for the front-line community groups that deliver these programs in all 50 states.

"The President's proposed budget for FY 2021 once again would leave poor older consumers, individuals with disabilities, and families with young children out in the cold by zeroing out funding for three critical health and safety programs," **said Olivia Wein, staff attorney with the National Consumer Law Center.** "We urge Congress to stand up for struggling households and adequately fund these essential programs. The Administration's characterization that "LIHEAP is no longer a necessity" does not reflect the experiences of working families." LIHEAP and WAP are targeted to help vulnerable populations, including the elderly and families with young children, who are at risk from severe health complications, including death, from frigid winters and sweltering summers. LIHEAP provides bill assistance for families so they can afford essential home heating and cooling to stay safe. WAP provides cost-effective long-term measures to make drafty homes weather-tight and

lower energy bills year after year. CSBG funds community action agencies that are the front-line service agencies that deliver LIHEAP and WAP assistance.