

**John G. Levi, Chairman
LSC Board of Directors
Welcoming Remarks
Capitol Pro Bono Task Force Event
Oct. 2, 2012**

Welcome and thanks for coming to this very special event.

I am John G. Levi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation.

It's a great pleasure seeing so many leaders from the legal community here today as we unveil this far-reaching report of our Pro Bono Task Force.

Last year, the LSC Board created this Task Force to find ways to measurably increase pro bono across the country.

The Task Force was comprised of more than 60 outstanding members of the legal community under the remarkable leadership of co-chairs Dean Martha Minow of Harvard Law School and Harry Korrell, a partner at David Wright Tremaine in Seattle.

Despite their demanding schedules, task force members devoted enormous time, energy and creativity to the mission, which is reflected in the report. I can't thank them enough. Many of you are here today.

I also want to recognize and applaud DLA Piper, which provided invaluable pro bono administrative, editorial and production support under the leadership of co-CEO Lee Miller and pro bono partner Lisa Dewey. We could not have done this without Lee, Lisa, and their team.

The report we are releasing today presents the findings and recommendations of five Task Force working groups: Best Practices, Urban; Best Practices, Rural; Obstacles; Technology; and Big Ideas.

It also suggests steps that LSC, its grantees, and the legal profession can take to help shape pro bono into a reliable, organized system to deploy increased and consistent civil legal aid to the areas most affecting low-income Americans to better match the available talent with the unmet need.

Of course, we must recognize, as the report itself finds, that as important as pro bono lawyers are, they cannot do it all. In fact, the report concludes that "little can be done without providing LSC and legal service organizations, which are tasked with running pro bono programs, with the necessary resources for doing so."

Pro bono service not only honors the highest ethical standards of our profession, it also bolsters the foundation of our democracy.

As legal service resources decline and demand for such services skyrockets, more and more low-income Americans are being shut out of the system.

If we continue down this slippery slope, confidence in the rule of law will not long survive and our wonderful democracy will be seriously threatened.

This report lays out a blueprint for how increased pro bono service—together with the indispensable work of legal service lawyers—can help open the justice system to thousands more low-income Americans and help restore the promise of equal justice.

It could not come at a more important time.