

**STATEMENT OF EARL JOHNSON, DIRECTOR, LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM**

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you very much, Sarge.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, yesterday you heard from Dr. English about a new and innovative program in the health field. It follows a tradition of Federal support of new and important programs in the health field. But until just 2 years ago the Federal Government had not been involved in any programs in the legal field. Yet, in 2 years some dramatic progress has been made.

There are now legal services projects in 48 of the 50 States of the Union, in 45 of the 50 largest cities. There are, in just 2 years, 700 full-time law offices funded and 1,400 full-time attorneys.

Now, this dramatic progress could not have been made without the wholehearted support of the legal profession.

I would like to quote to you briefly from the joint statement of Orison Marden, the president of the American Bar Association; Revius Ortique, the president of the National Bar Association; Maynard Toll, the national leader of the National Legal Aid and Defender Association; in their testimony before the Senate subcommittee just about a week ago.

As they said:

During this year of phenomenal expansion, the American Bar Association and other bar organizations have greatly stepped up their assistance in the promotion of the Legal Services program. A major portion of the energies and finances of these organizations is now being expended in support of the program. The presidents, officers, and other members of these associations have traveled throughout the United States to speak to these groups and other groups in legal services.

State and local bar associations with some rare exceptions have also given overwhelming support to legal services. Nearly all of the programs funded have been supported by the local bar association or legal aid society. State and local bar associations have likewise sponsored numerous educational programs, institutes, and seminars informing lawyers and laymen about legal services.

The support of the ABA has led to a dramatic improvement in the legal services for the poor in this country and yet it is as yet still a drop in the bucket.

Before the legal services program came into existence, only one-tenth of 1 percent of the total amount that is spent on lawyers in this country was being spent on lawyers for poor people—one-tenth of 1 percent—to bring justice to 20 percent or more of our population.

The American Bar Foundation in their preliminary study of the dimensions of the need for legal services found that there is a minimum of 14 million legal problems a year that arise among the poor of this Nation and only a few thousand of those persons have the assistance of lawyers.

The legal services program has three major functions. One is the representation of individuals and groups of poor people; to protect their rights, to protect them against incursions by landlords or credit companies, or the Government.

The second major function is community education or preventive law, attempting to teach the poor about their legal rights and responsibilities so that they can avoid common legal pitfalls and avoid getting into legal trouble.