

they were getting professional marriage counseling and had worked out what appeared to be a durable reconciliation.

8. The plaintiff and the defendant had several children. The defendant father abandoned the family. The plaintiff applied for and received Aid to Dependent Children. Having no funds to secure assistance of a private attorney, the plaintiff came to the Legal Services Center to institute a divorce action. Her Legal Services attorney secured a support order against the defendant father, which he complied with, making support payments to the plaintiff. These payments were counted by the Department of Public Assistance as a family resource and reduced the amount of Public Assistance grants to the plaintiff's family.

9. The Seattle Housing Authority operates a public housing project for people with low incomes, computing its rent on an annual basis, according to income. If a husband and wife separate during the year, the rent computation is not changed, even though the income situation may be drastically altered as a result of the separation, unless a divorce action is filed. The plaintiff and her husband and children lived in a public housing project at the beginning of the year. During the year, the husband left the plaintiff, and did not provide her with support. The plaintiff came to the Legal Services Center to seek a divorce, which was instituted for her, resulting in a reduction of her rent.

SUMMARY

Several purposes are served by Legal Services attorneys handling divorce litigation, which would probably otherwise be neglected.

1. Handling divorces results in obtaining support orders, obtaining partial support and reducing Public Assistance grants;
2. Handling divorce litigation may result in freeing one spouse from a hopeless marital relationship, enabling her or him to remarry and try to establish a more stable family;
3. Handling divorce litigation may result in obtaining orders for the protection of parties to the marriage from physical and mental abuse;
4. Handling domestic relationships may result in referrals to other social agencies, leading to a reconciliation;
5. Handling divorce litigation may result in rent reductions in public housing projects.

Mr. DANIELS. What is the American Bar Association feeling toward this divorce and separation matter?

Mr. JOHNSON. Their position is the same position that we have taken, that is; that the legal services program should render assistance in those kinds of problems.

In fact, our national advisory committee spoke to this question at a recent meeting. The national advisory committee of the legal services program, which as you are probably aware, has the immediate past president of the ABA, the current president, the president-elect of the ABA, and many other ABA officials on it, passed this resolution unanimously.

It is stated that:

It is to be expected that as legal services programs get underway there will be a cycle of problems in the family law area. For those who have not had legal services available to them, these are often the most immediate problems requiring attention. They will often arise out of long-standing situations for which there has previously been no redress. These problems should be handled by legal services programs and their relation to legal problems in other areas, such as housing or credit protection, fully explored.

This was a unanimous resolution of the national advisory committee.

Mr. MEEDS. Mr. Chairman, may I ask one further question?

Chairman PERKINS. Yes.

Mr. MEEDS. Mr. Johnson, is it also not true that the legal services bureaus in most instances have very good working relationships with