

**Gov. John Lynch  
Campaign for Legal Services Breakfast  
Radisson Hotel, Manchester  
Monday, April 11, 2011**

Good morning. Thank you for inviting me to join. It is great to see so many people here today supporting such a wonderful and important cause.

Legal aid in New Hampshire is critical to providing access to legal system for many New Hampshire people who otherwise would have no avenues to seek justice. So it's important that we all support the mission of legal aid to ensure the integrity of our system of justice.

Legal assistance has been very helpful to my office. Our office of Citizen Services receives a number of calls each day from people who looking for help. Often times, they need legal assistance, assistance we cannot provide them. That's where legal aid comes in.

Legal assistance is also a great example of what New Hampshire is all about.

Time and again throughout our state we so often see neighbor helping neighbor in times of need. It's part of our high quality of life and part of what makes this such a great place to work and live.

Members of the legal community, businesses like the many here today, and the people of this state who support New Hampshire Legal Assistance, Legal Advice & Referral Center, and the New Hampshire Pro Bono program, help their neighbors each and every day.

They help a mother protect her children from violence, or a veteran fighting for the benefits he has rightfully earned or a senior fighting back against consumer fraud. These are your neighbors who receive help from legal assistance, who are able to access our justice system regardless of their ability to hire an attorney.

The State of New Hampshire also supports legal assistance through our state budget.

There is no question these continue to be difficult economic times for our state and our nation. While New Hampshire is doing better economically than just about every other state, we still face some tough decisions in putting the next state budget together.

In my budget proposal, I reduced spending across state government, on average of about 5 percent. I believe it was important to have balance in making spending reductions and our reductions to legal assistance, while not easy, was fair considering the changes we made across the budget.

But the House version of the budget eliminates all state support for legal assistance.

If that is allowed occur, it will be the less fortunate and the most vulnerable among us who will disproportionately feel the pain. I think that is wrong and I urge the Senate to restore funding to legal assistance to the levels I proposed.

I again want to thank you all for being here today for your support of legal aid and I look forward to continue working with you all.

Thank you.