



Sunset Caucus

## Waste Action Alert

*A publication of the RSC Sunset Caucus from co-chairs Kevin Brady (R-TX) and Jason Chaffetz (R-UT)  
Rep. Tom Price (R-GA), RSC Chairman*

### **Eliminate Legal Services Corporation Funding**

*February 24, 2010*

**Program or Item Targeted:** The Legal Services Corporation.

**One-Year Cost of Program or Item:** \$420 million in FY 2010 (the highest level in the history of this controversial program).

**Background on Program or Item to Be Sunseted:** The Legal Services Corporation (LSC) was created by Congress in 1974. The program is intended to provide free, legal assistance to the poor in civil, non-criminal matters. According to CRS, in 2008, the Legal Services Corporation funded 137 legal services programs in 918 offices.

**Why This Program or Item Is Wasteful:** Instead of focusing on this core mission, the LSC has assisted lawyers and groups engaged in lobbying, advocacy of political causes, and litigation against the federal government. The program has not been authorized since 1980. Services currently provided by the LSC are duplicated by state and local governments, bar associations, and private organizations. Senator Phil Gramm explained his opposition to the program in 1995 as follows: "They're being advocates for the existing welfare bureaucracy, and while they may have a right to do it, they don't have a right to do it with taxpayers' money."

A recent *Washington Times* analysis also points out many examples of wasteful Legal Services Corporation spending: "... a decorative natural-stone wall, no-bid contracts for consultants, alcohol for a congressional party and more than 100 casino hotel rooms that were never occupied..." In previous years, according to the same analysis, taxpayer dollars have been used by this program on "limousines, first-class airfare, and \$14 Death by Chocolate pastries for its executives."

**Legislative Steps Taken So Far:** Representative Jeb Hensarling (R-TX) introduced an amendment to the FY 2010 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations bill to strike funding for this program.

If you would like to participate in eliminating wasteful programs with the RSC Sunset Caucus, please e-mail [brad.watson@mail.house.gov](mailto:brad.watson@mail.house.gov).

If you have a bill or amendment to highlight in the next Waste Action Alert please contact [ryan.tronovitch@mail.house.gov](mailto:ryan.tronovitch@mail.house.gov).

Note: Not every item featured in the Waste Action Alerts is necessarily endorsed by the RSC. These Alerts highlight the individual initiatives of members of the RSC Sunset Caucus.

*"The RSC Sunset Caucus uncovers government waste and seeks to eliminate it,  
working to sunset programs that taxpayers shouldn't be paying for."*

**RSC**   
Republican Study Committee