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National Legal Aid and Defender Association

Chicago Office: 1155 East 60th Street/Chicago, Illinois 60637 /312/684-4000

Washington Office: 1601 Connecticut Avenue, N.W./Washington, D.C. 20009 /202/462-1608

December 14, 1972

Dear Friend:

My years in government and as a lawyer have provided me a broad opportunity to measure and observe the quality of justice in America. It is all too frequently wanting. We have watched jails and prisons crammed with hopeless people needing help and finding only dehumanization. We have watched as courts denied justice consistently by intolerable delays.

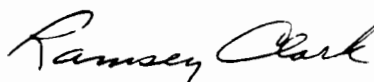
We have seen decisions of the Supreme Court guarantee our people rights to counsel and trial by jury, and we have seen public defenders who believe in our system and have faith in America's purpose exhaust themselves in an impossible effort to fulfill the rights of the people. In hundreds of courtrooms across the nation there is no public defender and the poor face prosecution without rights essential to their dignity.

The poor -- waking to their rights as Americans -- have formed long lines waiting for assistance in Legal Aid and Legal Services offices believing we mean what we say. Caseloads exceed emergency levels yet no relief is in sight, for the Congress is not making increased funds available, the states have been even slower to act and individuals do not know how they can help.

I urge you to lend a hand in this crisis. Join the National Legal Aid and Defender Association. For more than 60 years, NLADA has provided leadership, coordination, technical assistance and standards of performance to those who seek justice for the poor by providing lawyers to protect their rights.

Please help make equal justice under law a reality for all people.

Sincerely,



Ramsey Clark