Dear Candidates,

Legal Aid Pledge Card

We are asking you to sign the attached pledge card to show your support for Legal Aid.

Electoral Support for Legal Aid

Access to justice based on legal aid provision is not an issue that was aired during the recent televised debates. However, the electorate recognise that access to justice is an issue of critical importance.

In a YouGov poll published at the beginning of April, 84% of respondents said that access to justice including access to legal aid was a fundamental right and 89% said that it was important that legal aid was available to ensure access to justice for all income groups.

http://www.theguardian.com/law/2015/apr/13/justice-concern-free-healthcare-yougov-poll-legal-aid-cuts

The Importance of Legal Aid

The chronic difficulty that ordinary people have in getting legal advice and, if necessary, taking cases to court and to tribunals will become an important political issue in the next parliament. MPs now report that nearly 40% of the problems raised at their constituency surgeries involve access to justice.

There are currently a diminishing number of legal-aid law firms in your constituencies, all small businesses employing committed people whose reach extends to the hundreds of constituents who have passed through their doors in the last five years. Those who run law firms , their employees and their clients hope to see a real commitment from their prospective MPs to access to justice including the protection of legal aid provision.

The truth about Legal Aid

Despite sensationalist reporting of high Legal Aid Costs and "fat-cat lawyers", the truth is that Legal Aid accounts for a tiny proportion of Government expenditure, has been already drastically cut year on year , and relies on the good -will of committed lawyers who earn a fraction of those in private practice. We would be happy to provide further information if necessary. Legal Aid provision was introduced in the post war years, an age of greater austerity than the current period. It has also been shown that cutting Legal Aid incurs greater public costs in other areas, as different agencies and departments pick up the problems that legal action would have helped.

Vote For Justice Campaign

The London Criminal Courts Solicitors Association is sending out this pledge card to you and your fellow candidates.

Please confirm you are willing to sign the pledge.

We will add your name to our list of candidates who support legal aid, which will be published on-line, and publicised in the run-up to the election.

We will be using Twitter and other social media to endorse candidates who support Legal Aid and Justice.

Justice Campaigners will be actively campaigning for pro Legal-Aid candidates during the election campaign, particularly in marginal constituencies and target seats.

Our campaign is non-Party political, but unashamedly pro-Legal Aid. We hope we can rely on your support.

Yours sincerely,

*Add name*

*Co-signatories if you wish to add them:-*

Greg Foxsmith (Junior Vice President, LCCSA) www.lccsa.org.uk

Rhona Friedman (founder member, the Justice Alliance)

Robin Murray (Criminal Law Solicitors Association)

Joy Merriam (Council Member of The Law Society, Chair of Access to Justice Committee)