

Joint Statement of Three Justice Organizations on Sequestration Cuts to Courts

Severe and indiscriminate federal court budget reductions through sequestration combined with chronically anemic state funding for courts threaten access to justice for every American and put court petitioners, staff and judges in physical jeopardy.

The failure of leaders in Washington, D.C., to agree on a deficit reduction plan has triggered across-the-board cuts to essential government functions. The federal judiciary and every individual and business that depends on our courts will bear the burden for congressional deadlock through costly delays.

State courts have endured years of withering cuts despite overwhelming caseloads. As most states devote a shrinking fraction of their annual budgets to courts, communities increasingly discover that their courthouses are closed when they most need judicial remedy.

In recent weeks, our nation has seen a spate of gun violence on court grounds in Alabama, Delaware, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Texas. Yet sequestration will leave federal court security positions unfunded. State courts are already hamstrung from local budget woes and the projected shortfalls from sequestration will likely mean even fewer resources for state judicial systems.

Our organizations — the American Association for Justice, the American Bar Association and DRI—The Voice of the Defense Bar — representing a concerned legal community, call on policymakers on Capitol Hill and statehouses across the country to provide adequate funding for our federal and state judiciaries. Access to justice is a promise that would be too costly for our country to deny.



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About the American Association for Justice

As the world's largest trial bar, the American Association for Justice (formerly known as the Association of Trial Lawyers of America) works to make sure people have a fair chance to receive justice through the legal system when they are injured by the negligence or misconduct of others--even when it means taking on the most powerful corporations. Visit <http://www.justice.org>.

About the American Bar Association

With nearly 400,000 members, the American Bar Association is one of the largest voluntary professional membership organizations in the world. As the national voice of the legal profession, the ABA works to improve the administration of justice, promotes programs that assist lawyers and judges in their work, accredits law schools, provides continuing legal education, and works to build public understanding around the world of the importance of the rule of law. Visit www.americanbar.org.

About DRI – The Voice of the Defense Bar

For more than fifty years, DRI has been the voice of the defense bar, advocating for 22,000 defense attorneys, commercial trial attorneys, and corporate counsel and defending the integrity of the civil judiciary. A thought leader, DRI provides world-class legal education, deep expertise for policy-makers, legal resources, and networking opportunities to facilitate career and law firm growth. For more information, log on to www.dri.org