ORAL HISTORY OF JAMES J. SANDMAN, ESQ.

Eleventh Interview – January 31, 2022

This interview was conducted on behalf of the Oral History Project of the District of Columbia Circuit. The interviewer is Bill Marmon and the interviewee is Jim Sandman. The interview took place at Bill Marmon's apartment in Chevy Chase, MD on Monday, January 31, 2022. This is the second interview of the second set of interviews (the eleventh interview overall).

MR. MARMON: We are here on January 31, 2022, to do the second interview with Jim Sandman. These are follow-on interviews from nine that he did earlier, and today he's going to talk about his actual work at the Legal Services Corporation, which he joined in 2011, as president, and served there until February of 2020.

MR. MARMON: Jim, good morning, and--do you remember what your first day was like at LSC?

MR. SANDMAN: I do. It was mostly meeting people, visiting others around the office, introducing myself, and having an all-staff meeting where I could speak to everyone about what I hoped to accomplish at LSC.

MR. MARMON: And what was that?

MR. SANDMAN: I had a number of goals. LSC is a funding organization--despite its name, it doesn't provide any direct legal services to anybody. So my first order of business was to increase our funding, to provide more financial support to the then-136 legal aid organizations around the country that LSC was supporting. To do that, we had to be able to make a persuasive case to Congress, a case that would elicit bipartisan support, that money spent on LSC was a good investment of hard-earned taxpayer dollars. Second, I

hoped to make LSC a model grant-maker, the kind of grant-maker that others would look to and say, "How does LSC do it?" I wanted to support the efficiency and effectiveness of the organizations we funded and be a prudent steward of the money entrusted to us. Third, I hoped to advance LSC's leadership in technology. Since about 2000, LSC had had a special grant program, modest in size--no more than $4 million a year--to provide grants to promote the use of technology to assist low-income people with civil legal needs. Although the annual budget for the technology grant program was small, the cumulative impact of that money over time had been significant. As I learned from my new colleague Glenn Rawdon, who played a leadership role in that grant program, in the world of non-profits, a little money will cause people to jump very high. And finally, I hoped to make LSC a good place to work. People work at LSC because of their commitment to the mission, their passion for improving access to justice for low-income people, and I wanted them to feel pride in their work, in their place of work, and in their colleagues and to know that they were supported in what they did.

MR. MARMON: Where was LSC located?

MR. SANDMAN: LSC was located in Georgetown, on Water Street, right along the Potomac, just east of Key Bridge.

MR. MARMON: And what was the funding appropriation when you arrived?

MR. SANDMAN: It was $410 million a year, which is what Congress had appropriated in the previous year, 2010. At the time of that appropriation, Democrats

controlled both the House and the Senate. $410 million was, in absolute dollars, the highest funding amount LSC had ever received; in inflation-adjusted dollars, it was well below what LSC had received in 1980. But with a new Congress in 2011, the situation was different, and I knew that maintaining funding at that level, let alone increasing it, would be a challenge.

MR. MARMON: So let's talk about the legislative work that you did at LSC. You told me last time, that lobbying was not something that you felt that you had done a lot of before and you weren't sure that you even liked the idea of lobbying.

MR. SANDMAN: Yes. I thought I could suck it up and do it, but it wasn't something I was enthusiastic about. But much to my surprise, I found out that I liked it. I learned that if you believe in what you're selling, the job is not only doable, but exciting. And I believed in what I was selling. For the first time in my life, I could understand how someone could be a professional fundraiser and enjoy it. I was intrigued by the process; everything about it was new to me. For example, I came to appreciate the importance of good relationships with staff. Staff are everything on Capitol Hill. Staff are the way you get a message through to a member of Congress; staff can be enormously helpful to you: if you don't have good relationships with staff, that can be very harmful to you. I remember one of my first meetings was with a Republican member of the House Appropriations subcommittee with jurisdiction over LSC. We didn't get to meet with the member at all,

we got to meet with a junior staffer, in the hall outside the member's office. We stood in the hall. She had a yellow legal pad, met with us for about five minutes, and I thought she was pretending to take notes. This did not go well. But you work with what you have. I treated her with respect, I made my best case, I thanked her, we followed up with a thank you letter, and a few years later, she became a strong supporter. I recall one occasion where we met with her in the lobby of the House of Representatives--literally the lobby-- and she went in to get the member, and bring him out to talk to us, privately, for ten minutes, while the House was in session. She had become a fan, and that was a function of long-term relationship-building. We'd come a long way since that first meeting in the hall.

I also learned about the importance of constituent service. I was guided in my work by two wonderful tutors: first John Constance, who was then director of government relations, and then, after about a year, his successor, Carol Bergman. They taught me that everything is about constituent service: what does this mean for the people back home in the member's district or state? Don't make a pitch about the national impact of LSC; the pitch has got to be how legal aid affects people in the district. You need to go in knowing a lot about the situation in the district, what the local grantee is doing to serve people in the district, what the hot issues on the ground are, recent successes. I learned that sometimes local media coverage is more valuable than national media coverage; every member of

Congress reads the hometown newspaper. They may not read the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post* or the *Wall Street Journal*, but they read their hometown newspaper. So an important achievement by a local legal aid organization, reported in the hometown newspaper, gets to the member, and it gives you a basis for making a pitch.

I learned that you don't need to meet with every member of Congress; what matters most is the people on the committees that control your appropriation and do oversight. We were under the Commerce, Justice, and Science subcommittees of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. That's where the funding legislation for us originated, and where we needed to focus our attention. I came to know the members on those subcommittees and their staffs over time. And I enjoyed it. I enjoyed seeing the offices of the members, and the difference between the office of a senior member, and the office of a person who's just arrived as a new electee in Washington. They get a basement office. The appearance of the office brings them down to Earth pretty quickly. It was a lot of fun, I enjoyed it.

MR. MARMON: And what would be a typical visit, how many people would be there from LSC, and -what was your strategy?

MR. SANDMAN: Typically, I would go to meetings after LSC staff had already had meetings with the staff of the member. Sometimes I would be meeting with a staffer, sometimes with the member. We would usually go with no more than three people: me, the director or subsequently vice president for

government relations, and another staff person from government relations at LSC. You don't get a lot of time. You have to make a pitch very quickly. You have to have an "elevator speech." If you're meeting with a member, if you get ten minutes, that's really good. I do remember one time meeting with Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA), shortly after he was elected, and he gave us half an hour, which was remarkable. His wife had been a legal aid lawyer; he understood what legal aid was all about. It was personal with him. I would always be prepared with talking points and facts worked up by the excellent staff at LSC so that we could get our points across very efficiently.

MR. MARMON: Right. And I guess it was tied to the legislative process?

MR. SANDMAN: Yes, to the appropriations process. Spring was the busy season. That's when the Appropriations Committees and subcommittees do most of their work. That's when ABA Days is--the ABA has a lobbying effort, typically every April, on Capitol Hill, where they bring members from the fifty states to Washington to lobby on issues of importance to the ABA. For as long as I was at LSC, the number one lobbying issue for ABA days was funding for the Legal Services Corporation. We would provide information to educate the people from the ABA who were coming to Washington to lobby for funding, in addition to doing our own lobbying.

MR. MARMON: And you said the appropriation--when you arrived-- was $410 million. How did that change in the years you were there?

MR. SANDMAN: It went down and then up. After the election of 2010, the Federal budget decreased. There was something called "sequestration," where the amount of Federal spending was reduced automatically by percentages every year. Maintaining a prior appropriation was almost impossible; increasing it, in that environment, was not in the cards. Our appropriation went down to $340-some million over the course of the coming years, before coming back up to about $465 million when I left.

One of the successes we had was increasing bipartisan support for LSC. I thought, and our crack government relations team thought, that it was very important to develop strong relationships on both sides of the aisle. No party is going to be in power forever. You need to be prepared for all contingencies. We used to find it very difficult to get Republican members of Congress to speak in support of our appropriation. They might vote for our appropriation but getting them to advocate affirmatively was difficult. Over time, we changed that, and we ended up with Republican leaders, both in the House and the Senate, who would advocate with their colleagues--sending what are called "Dear Colleague" letters to them--encouraging support for the Legal Services Corporation. Some would make speeches in committee or on the floor in support of our appropriation. That made a big difference.

MR. MARMON: What happened during the Trump years?

MR. SANDMAN: In each year of the Trump administration, the administration proposed eliminating funding for LSC. Zeroing us out. But in every year of the

Trump administration, our funding went up. Congress disagreed with the White House. The effort to zero out our budget did not succeed. And that was the best indication of the progress we made in increasing bipartisan support. Notwithstanding the administration's position, we had people like John Cornyn from Texas, and a Republican and a senior leader of the Senate, and Dan Sullivan, Republican from Alaska, taking positions in support of our funding. And we had strong support in the House as well.

MR. MARMON: Was Trump personally involved in the zeroing-out proposal?

MR. SANDMAN: I never saw any indication that he was. It seemed to be coming out of the Office of Management and Budget.

MR. MARMON: Well, let's move on to another aspect of the work that you did there. The management team, could you talk a little bit about what that consisted of, and how you may have adapted it over the years that you were there? Who were the key people?

MR. SANDMAN: When I arrived at LSC, there had been twenty presidents in 37 years. And each time the president changed, the senior management team tended to change. There'd been a lot of turnover, and I thought the organization reflected it [laughs]. Each president had his or her own agenda, and the staff would be kind of whipsawed from one president to the next, depending on what the president's priorities were. Some of the senior people under my predecessor had left by the time I got there. So I had to build a team. I mentioned John Constance, who was director of government relations and public affairs at the time I got there; he retired

after about a year, and then Carol Bergman joined us in that position. She was a wonderful addition -- very savvy, very experienced in the ways of Capitol Hill, a good teacher for me. We were a good team. I learned a lot from her, and she used me well [laughs]. I brought in Ron Flagg as general counsel. Ron was a past president of the DC Bar, which is how I had initially met him. He had been on the board of governors of the Bar when I was DC Bar president, and he had been the firm-wide pro bono partner at Sidley. He joined us in 2013 and became president when I left. I brought in Lynn Jennings as vice president for grants management. The core business of LSC is grant-making and grants oversight, and that was Lynn's responsibility. She had previous grant-making experience and significant government and public policy experience.

I brought in new leadership in technology and on the financial side of the operation, and we created a new office of data governance and analysis. I thought that better collection and use of data was very important. LSC had historically collected a lot of information from its grantees every year. It had very rigorous and detailed reporting requirements. But most of the reporting was about what are called outputs, rather than outcomes. Outputs capture how many and what kinds of cases grantees handled. They captured how many people they employed and how many people they served. But we were not capturing any information on outcomes of the matters in which grantees had provided assistance to clients. What happened? Was the home saved from foreclosure? Was the

eviction avoided? Did the victim of domestic violence get a protection order? Did a person get Social Security benefits? Did they get child support? If so, how much? There was no information reported to LSC about any of that. I thought that was important to have that information both to make a stronger case for funding--to be able to show people in concrete terms what we were doing with the money that was appropriated to us--and to promote efficiency and effectiveness among our grantees. Legal aid is terribly underfunded; all legal aid organizations have limited resources. They have to make decisions every day about whom to help and what level of service to provide. You can make those decisions much better if you know what works, what's going to make a difference.

I'll give you an example that I heard a couple of months after I joined LSC. I met with Colleen Cotter. Colleen was and is the executive director of the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, one of the finest legal aid executive directors in the United States. This was March of 2011, and the legal aid world was still feeling the effects of the Great Recession. A lot of foreclosure work was deluging legal aids. Colleen, because of good data collection at the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, was able to evaluate whether they were making a difference in representing their clients in foreclosure cases. They were able to correlate the results in the foreclosure cases they handled with the income levels of the clients they served. Their analysis showed that if their client had an income at or below 75% of the Federal poverty guideline, they never saved the home. But when they

served clients above that income level, they often did save the home. The reason for the difference seemed obvious: clients below 75% of the Federal poverty guideline just didn't have enough money, and there was no legal strategy that was going to change that. They couldn't negotiate a new mortgage with a lender, they couldn't work out a payment plan, they couldn't fend off the legal action. Based on the data, Colleen decided that they would concentrate their work on people at or above 75% of the Federal poverty guideline. They couldn't possibly serve everybody, so they decided to devote their limited resources to the people for whom they had the greatest likelihood of saving homes. You might disagree with that decision. There are important policy and philosophical reasons why you might want to provide help to everyone, regardless of income or likely outcome. But wouldn't you want to know whether your work is saving homes or not? I would! I thought that that kind of informed approach needed to be adopted more broadly, and that LSC should help. So we created a new office to provide more support to grantees in collecting and analyzing data, and to make better use of the data that LSC itself had.

MR. MARMON: That's fascinating. Let's talk about salaries. I guess these were public figures. And what was your salary?

MR. SANDMAN: My salary when I started was $170,000. The salary is tied by statute Level 5 of the Senior Executive Service, by statute. I was the highest-paid person in the organization; salaries tapered down from that.

MR. MARMON: Right. And tell me about the grant-making process.

MR. SANDMAN: I was surprised, when I got to LSC, how little I'd been told or understood about the grant-making process. There were three things I came to realize were very important to know that had never come up in the interview process or in my own research. The first was that LSC is a minority funder. It provides, on average, less than half of the financial support of the legal aid organizations it funds. If you were to read the Legal Services Corporation Act, and the regulations implementing it, you might get the impression that LSC is the only funder of the legal aid organizations it supports. For example, the statute dictates the composition of the boards of directors of the grantees. It requires that they be comprised of one-third client-eligible people, and that sixty percent of the members be lawyers. That leaves only seven percent of the board seats to be filled by people who aren't clients or lawyers. That's pretty authoritarian, on the part of a funder, to dictate the composition of a nonprofit's board, particularly if it's only a minority funder. By the time I left LSC, we were providing on average only about a third of the total financial support of our grantees. That average masked wide variations in funding, the difference depending on the extent to which state and local funding was available to grantees. For example in a place like Maryland, which is relatively generous in funding legal aid, our support for our grantee amounted to only about fifteen percent of its total funding, whereas in Alabama, which provided little if any state funding, our support was about 83% of the total funding of Legal Services of Alabama. But the regulatory scheme had been built in

a day when LSC had been actually providing much greater funding. The oldest figures I had available to me went back to 1980, and at that time LSC was providing an average of 88% of the funding of its grantees. The situation had changed over time, but the mindset of the grant-maker and the grant overseers had not changed.

Second, although LSC solicits applications for each of its geographic service areas, in reality there is virtually no competition for most LSC grants. There's one applicant. The applicant is the existing grantee. *Occasionally* there will be a competing application, often from a legal aid organization serving a contiguous geographic area. You would expect a grant-maker to have a choice of grantees, and to be able to pick and choose. Our choice was either to fund the single applicant or to leave a geographic service area with no legal aid organization funded by LSC. That's a pretty drastic alternative.

Third, we had virtually no discretion in the amount of the grant for each grantee. That's dictated by statute. There's a population-driven formula. Each grantee gets a percentage of LSC's appropriation for "basic field grants" --the vast majority of its funding--equal to its percentage share of the US poverty population. LSC has very, very limited discretion in deviating from that. It can withhold funding in the event of serious problems at a grantee, but it can't go above that statutory formula.

The result of these three factors – LSC's status as a minority grant-maker, the lack of competition for its grants, and the lack of discretion in

setting the amount of each grant – meant that a lot of the tools that you would expect a grant-maker to have to affect grantee behavior were not available. No one ever told me that. I had to figure that out on my own [laughs].

We did have a grant review process. When grantees applied, we could attach conditions to their grants, and we conducted oversight visits. We had other tools that we could use to try to guarantee efficiency and effectiveness and high-quality legal services.

MR. MARMON: How much would a typical grantee get?

MR. SANDMAN: It varied widely depending on the population of the service area. The biggest grantee was Legal Services New York City. At the time I left there were 132 grantees; if you divide 132 into the roughly $420, $430 million that was available for basic field grants, that would give you an average, but it did vary considerably. There are some very small grantees, because they served small geographic areas with much smaller poverty populations.

MR. MARMON: And these were all existing organizations that you would be funding?

MR. SANDMAN: Yes.

MR. MARMON: There's no such thing as an LSC grantee from scratch?

MR. SANDMAN: I recall one. American Samoa without any grantee for a while because of problems that had arisen with the prior grantee. A new non-profit entity was created in American Samoa that began to fund during my time. Aside from that I don't recall any brand-new start-up grantee. There were other

organizations that replaced an LSC grantee, but they were preexisting legal aid organizations.

MR. MARMON: Right. And what do these Legal Aid organizations do, how do they work, what is their function?

MR. SANDMAN: They provide direct legal services to low-income people with civil legal needs. Consistently over time, the case patterns are about 33% family law, 25-30% housing evictions, foreclosures, housing conditions--and then after that you drop down to about ten or twelve percent each for debt collection matters and employment matters. The case types disperse a lot once you get beyond family law and housing cases.

MR. MARMON: And how do the clients find the legal aid offices?

MR. SANDMAN: That's an issue. Good, well-run legal aid offices have strong roots and ties in their communities. They're connected to social services providers, to other organizations that are serving the needs of low-income people, to government agencies, to health care providers, to the faith community. They have to get the word out about their availability. But research has shown that a lot of people with civil legal needs never find their way to a legal aid organization because they don't self-identify their problem as a legal problem. An easy example is a person who has a consumer debt problem. They may be hounded by debt collectors who are acting in blatant violation of Federal and state law. The lender may be trying to collect a debt that isn't owed, or an amount that is in excess of the debt actually owed. Often a person in that situation will describe their problem

as a financial problem, not a legal problem. They don't know they have a legal remedy, and they never find their way to a legal aid organization. Often the people who do find their way to a legal aid organization are people who have figured out that they have a legal problem, they've figured out where to go, and they manage to get their way through the application process. But that's the tip of an iceberg. Educating people about what a legal problem is, what legal assistance is available, and how to get it is a very important part of the job that legal aid organizations need to undertake.

MR. MARMON: Yeah. Do you have any figures on how many people you actually serve, and how you serve them?

MR. SANDMAN: Yes. LSC has detailed data on that and publishes it every year in a report called "By the Numbers." The report identifies the number of clients served and it estimates the number of people in households served. It breaks down cases by subject matter and then by subcategories as well. That's where I get the information about the percentage of family law cases and housing cases, for example.

MR. MARMON: And what sort of people are working in this area, the lawyers that come to these organizations? Are these people who are just starting out their legal careers, or do you have people who make this their career?

MR. SANDMAN: Both. There are a number of people who are career legal services lawyers. Some started in the 1960s. For example Steve Gottlieb, the executive director of the Legal Aid Society of Atlanta, started there in 1968 and is

still executive director. A number of people who are still active began in the ‘60s, ‘70s, and early ‘80s. There are people who started recently, right out of law school. There is often a gap between these two groups. After about five years, there’s attrition among lawyers within legal aid organizations, often because of low salaries. People just can’t survive on the low salaries of legal aid organizations, and they make a career change. They’ll often go to government positions that pay better. Legal aid lawyers as a group are the lowest-paid lawyers in the United States. So you have sort of a barbell-type grouping of lawyers at legal aid organizations, with one chunk at the top, one chunk at the bottom, and then a narrow middle.

I think the lawyers who devote their careers to legal services are heroes. These are people who every day, day in and day out, for years, for decades, devote themselves to serving other people despite low pay, crushing workloads, and the emotional burden of their clients’ circumstances. I’ll never be able to say I was one of them. I came late to what, for them, has been their life’s work. I drew my inspiration from them. For the newer people, the task is always to try to retain them. I keep in touch with a number of young people who started in legal aid when I was at LSC who are still with it.

MR. MARMON: And what is the starting salary?

MR. SANDMAN: Typically it’s in the neighborhood of $55,000.

MR. MARMON: How much would the senior lawyer in a field office make?

MR. SANDMAN: It depends on the size of the organization. Some of them are quite big, because they have funding well beyond what LSC gives them. A very experienced executive director at a very large organization might make $200,000. In 2020, the average salary of a managing attorney with more than 40 years of experience was $102,000

MR. MARMON: Right. And you've mentioned some of the legal issues, housing, and so forth. But--have there been any developments in the law that you could point to in these areas.

MR. SANDMAN: There have been. LSC grantees are not permitted to lobby. They can lobby for their own funding, but their ability to pursue systemic reform through class actions and legislative change has been severely limited by statute since the 1980s and the 1990s in the eighties and the nineties. There have been changes in some places in landlord-tenant law. There are now eviction-diversion programs in some states, and housing conditions laws that make it possible for tenants to withhold rent in the event that the landlord isn't maintaining habitable conditions of an apartment. But these changes were not the result of legislative advocacy by LSC-funded legal aid organizations. LSC-funded organizations achieve change through smart litigation strategy and winning cases that change the law and the behaviors of businesses and government agencies.

MR. MARMON: Is most of the work actually court cases? What percentage would be non-court advice and counsel?

MR. SANDMAN: A significant majority of the work is what's called "brief advice and counsel." That is 70-75% of the work; 25-30% is what's called "extended service" work. That's because of the limited resources.

MR. MARMON: "Extended service work" would be litigation?

MR. SANDMAN: Yes. It could also be non-litigation involving, say, protracted negotiation. That mix of brief versus extended service is one of the reasons why good data is so important. The question I always asked was: does brief advice and counsel make a difference? One of the hardest decisions a legal aid executive director makes every day is how to choose who gets extended service and who gets brief advice and counsel. Are you better off providing limited assistance to a large number of people, or extended assistance to a small group of people? The answer might vary depending on what other forms of legal aid are available and the preferences of the particular community. The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, which I mentioned earlier, not only has good data collection, but also has a process for following up by text message with clients who have received brief service to find out what happened. Did they follow up with the advice that they got? If they did, did it make a difference?

MR. MARMON: What sort of challenges did you have over the course of your presidency?

MR. SANDMAN: Funding was always a challenge. It went down before it went up. When the Trump administration first proposed to eliminate our funding, that was an all-hands-on-deck moment. We didn't know what the outcome would be.

MR. MARMON: How did that play out?

MR. SANDMAN: As I said, the funding went up in each year of the Trump administration. We had a solid base of relationships in place on Capitol Hill. We weren't starting from scratch. That made all the difference in the world. Congress decides LSC's funding, not the President. We had for a number of years been building our relationships, which put us in a good position when this unfolded.

Among my biggest challenges was improving LSC's relationships with our grantees. When I got to LSC, I found that we carried a lot of baggage with our grantees. There was a lot of history there. It went back to the Reagan administration, when the people in charge of LSC were not committed to the mission of LSC, when the board had been put in place to try to eliminate the organization. Grantees were suspicious of LSC. I found this out at one of the first meetings of grantees I went to in late March of 2011. It was a meeting of New England legal aid organizations, some but not all of which were funded by LSC. I was invited to attend and told the meeting would start at 10 a.m. at a hotel outside of Boston. I got up at four that morning and flew up to Boston. I showed up at ten. Within five minutes after I sat down, I was asked to leave the room. I was told that they were about to get a report from Don Saunders, who was a vice president at the National Legal Aid and Defender Association, about what was going on in Washington, and this was a confidential briefing that I couldn't hear. I was the only person asked to leave. Well, I knew Don

Saunders. I had heard him give a briefing to a meeting of grantees in Omaha just the week before. But I was told to leave and cool my heels in a room down the hall until they were ready for me. I had been told to arrive at ten, and I'd gotten up at four in the morning to be there on time. I was not happy. I thought it was rude. You don't invite someone to your party and then tell them to leave when they show up on time. This was a signal to me about the nature of the relationship between LSC and its grantees. LSC was perceived not just as a funder, but as a regulator, and as a harsh regulator, almost as an adversary. I didn't have an opportunity to speak to the group until after lunch that day. By then I had cooled off [laughs]. I used my presentation as an opportunity to introduce myself and to try to begin to turn around what I perceived as a very troubled relationship. By the end of the day I was told, "You can come back anytime!" But it was a hard experience. It was one of these "you don't know what you don't know" situations. This was my introduction to the history and to what had preceded meant for me. I didn't create that situation, but I sure had to deal with it.

By the time I left, I think I had a very strong relationship with our grantees. I would speak at the fundraisers. I would support them in their communities. I would give pep talks to their employees. I realized that when I went out to visit grantees, giving a pep talk was one of the most important things I could do. I know how to give a good pep talk to legal aid lawyers. I think they're heroes, and I tell them that. I thought, "My job

is to set these people on fire," to remind them why they became legal aid lawyers, and to make them proud. And to thank them for what they do, to let them know it's important, and it's noticed.

MR. MARMON: That's interesting.

MR. SANDMAN: One of the biggest challenges--a perpetual challenge--is ignorance of the problem LSC exists to address – that is, the magnitude of the access-to-justice problem in the United States. I learned a lot myself about the magnitude of the problem that I hadn't known about previously. I didn't think I'd been living under a rock, I thought I was pretty well-informed, but I was stunned by the magnitude of the problem. John Levi, the chair of LSC's board, was a powerful force in trying to increase awareness of the problem: awareness within Congress, awareness within the legal profession, awareness in the business community, awareness in academia, awareness across society. A lot of our work together involved tapping LSC's convening power, to bring together groups of people to educate them: business leaders; the judiciary; members of the bar; law schools. Over the course of my nine years there, I visited 47 states. My mission on my visits was to try to educate people about what the problem was, why they should care about it, and what they could do about it. John was just a master. During the Obama administration, he got them to co-sponsor White House forums on access to justice, along with LSC, where we'd bring together a few hundred people for panel presentations. The President came once or twice, Joe Biden came when he was Vice President, the

Attorney General came. These were high-profile events that would elevate attention to the issue. John used our board meetings, held quarterly around the country, to convene discussions about the problem. Ignorance of the problem was a big challenge. It still is.

MR. MARMON: Let's talk about technology.

MR. SANDMAN: In 2012 and 2013, in two separate sessions, we convened a summit on technology. The purpose of the summit was to explore the potential for technology to provide some form of effective assistance to 100% of low-income people with an essential civil legal need. That language was chosen very carefully. "Some form of effective assistance for 100%." Traditionally legal aid organizations turn away huge numbers of people with no help or inadequate help because of limited resources. The idea was, "Is it possible to use technology to provide *some* help--some *effective* help--to everyone?" The goal was to turn no one away with no help. The premise was also that it's not going to be possible to provide a lawyer to everybody and to explore whether there are substitutes for that, Can you use technology to provide basic information? Can you use technology to provide instructional videos? Can you use technology to provide tools that are analogous to TurboTax, where you might lead a user through a plain-language interview, and then use the responses to the interview questions to populate a court-approved form that a user can file, as opposed to trying to figure out how to fill out a court form on their own? That was the purpose of the summit. It got a lot of attention and attracted some great

speakers. We had Todd Park, the Chief Technology Officer of the United States, talk to us. He knew nothing about legal aid. But he did know about technology, he knew about data, he was a problem-solver, and he was very, very smart. On the spot, he began to throw out suggestions. He was the best speaker of the conference, and he was the person who walked in knowing the least about legal aid. I thought there was a lesson there about the value of reaching out beyond the traditional legal aid world and beyond the legal profession, to bring in other people from other disciplines from whom we could. Ultimately, the lesson of the summit expanded beyond technology as the solution, and to thinking more broadly about how we might provide some form of effective assistance to 100% of people with an essential civil legal need. That goal was adopted by the National Center for State Courts, which created a program called "Justice for All" to follow up on that suggestion and provide support to state groups around the country in implementing that kind of approach to providing legal help to people. It can be done through court-based resource centers, self-help centers; it might be done through technology; it might be done through telephone hotlines. That effort is still underway.

MR. MARMON: Well, good. Let me ask you one final question for today then, and that is: sum up your tenure at LSC, and tell me about the things you're proudest of accomplishing, and any other observations you have about your nine years there.

MR. SANDMAN: I did nothing alone there. I wouldn't and couldn't claim credit for anything. I did build a good team there, and that team is still in place. A number of the people I brought in there would say that the longest job they've ever held is their job at the Legal Services Corporation. That churn at the top, that I talked about, the constant turnover--that stopped. We were able to put a team in place where there was continuity, long-term strategic planning, and implementation of a strategic plan. I think that in my time there the technology team, headed by Glenn Rawdon, elevate technology, and LSC's reputation for technology, substantially. I believe every organization needs to play to its strengths: what is it known for; where does it have a special niche; where can it have an impact? LSC's impact in technology was significant. We convened a technology conference every year. The first one I went to was at an Embassy Suites hotel in Albuquerque. I spoke at lunch there on the first day, and the lunch was in a cordoned-off section of the lobby. There weren't a hundred people there. By my last conference, in 2020, there were more than 600 people in a proper hotel ballroom. We would get media coverage, and a lot of attention, and made a difference. I think the progress we made in data collection and analysis was important. And I think in some circles, we did make progress educating people about the problem -- particularly, and John Levi gets the credit for this--among unusual suspects, newcomers, not people who were part of the traditional access-to-justice or legal aid circle, who could really help get the message to new audiences.

MR. MARMON: Good. Thank you, Jim.