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NEWS

# The Equal Justice Illinois Campaign Honors Officials for Increased State Funding for Legal Aid Services

By Claire Mariano



State Senators Kirk Dillard and Jeff Schoenberg receive their Illinois Equal Justice Awards

The Equal Justice Illinois Campaign and the Illinois Equal Justice Foundation recognized several Illinois leaders in September for their efforts to increase funding for the state’s legal aid services. Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, State Senator Jeff Schoenberg and State Senator Kirk Dillard were honored for their success in increasing state funding for legal aid from \$472,900 to \$2 million in the FY 2006 state budget.

The Illinois Equal Justice Foundation estimates that approximately 30,000 additional Illinois families in crisis will be served by the increase in funding. The Illinois Equal Justice Foundation distributes the funds to the state’s legal aid organizations.

“People who lack legal representation or adequate legal information are put at a disadvantage,” said State Senator Jeff Schoenberg (D-9<sup>th</sup>). “Legal aid helps level the playing field for the poor. I will continue to work in the General Assembly to help ensure that Illinois’ working

families and elderly have access to legal assistance.”

Before the recent appropriation, Illinois ranked last in the amount of funding it appropriated for legal aid. It averaged less than \$500,000, compared to the national average of \$6.1 million. For more information on the Illinois Equal Justice Foundation, visit [www.equaljusticeillinois.org](http://www.equaljusticeillinois.org).

Press Release: Illinois Equal Justice Foundation, Equal Justice Illinois Campaign Honors Attorney General Lisa Madigan, Sen. Jeff Schoenberg and Sen. Kirk Dillard with 2005 *Champion of Justice Awards*, Sept. 27, 2005



Illinois Attorney General and Senator Schoenberg helped increase Illinois’ legal aid fund from \$472,000 to \$2 million in 2006.

**The Equal Justice Illinois Campaign is a bipartisan coalition of state leaders working to increase the state’s appropriation for civil legal aid.**