

July 30, 2020

To the Board of Directors of Maryland Legal Aid:

As alumni of Maryland Legal Aid (MLA), we write to express our dismay regarding MLA leadership's termination of Anita Bailey, Blake Fetrow, John Marshall and Lisa Sarro from their positions as Chief Attorneys and Supervising Attorney, respectively. The emerging facts strongly suggest that MLA retaliated against these seasoned attorneys for daring to express their concerns that MLA's insistence on rigid requirements regarding staff's physical presence in the office unnecessarily compromised the health and well-being of staff, clients, and other members of the public.

These longstanding, senior employees questioned MLA's insistence on an inflexible paint-by-the-numbers approach, which would force staff into rigid work patterns during a time that calls for flexibility, ignores the needs of those who must – and can – work remotely and on modified schedules because their children cannot go to school, compromises the health of those at high risk of infection, and fails to recognize that legal work can often be done as effectively remotely as from an office. These staff members' plea that management approve more nuanced guidelines that would allow them to meet conditions and needs in their individual offices and in the local communities they serve appears to have cost them their jobs.

Many of us were privileged to work with Anita, Blake, Lisa, and John. Their dedication to clients, to excellent and creative lawyering, and to MLA staff, is unsurpassed. They provided inspiration to clients and staff, had a lasting impact on clients and the communities we served, and demonstrated enormous courage, befitting a legal aid lawyer.

What concerns us all is that these decisions – the demand to return to the physical workspace without allowing the return process to be adequately tailored in each office to community conditions, staff needs and alternative approaches to providing high-quality and safe client access as well as the vicious response to staff who speak up – reflect longstanding, deep organizational problems and an abandonment of MLA's core values.

As alumni who are fiercely proud of our service and MLA's historic leadership for equal justice, racial equity, and human rights, we urge the Board to take immediate steps to bring the organization back on course. We respectfully request that Blake Fetrow, Anita Bailey, John Marshall and Lisa Sarro be immediately offered reinstatement to their positions at MLA. We request that senior management engage in meaningful and, we hope, collaborative and respectful discussions with staff and their union representatives, together with Supervising and Chief Attorneys, to craft guidelines for providing on-site and remote services that align with statewide reopening and Centers for Disease Control guidelines, and that permit staff the flexibility they need to continue to maximize high-quality service and impact for clients.

Finally, we urge the Board to undertake a broader, comprehensive, and independent investigation. Based on the outpouring of disappointment and anger we heard and shared in response to this news, it is clear that this is not an isolated lapse of judgment but confirmation of what many see as upper management's indifference to and disrespect of, staff commitment and

talent. Left unaddressed, this situation will continue to hobble MLA's delivery of services and harm the clients who staff are committed to serve.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Alumni, Maryland Legal Aid

**Alumni, Maryland Legal Aid
(August 6, 2020)**

Abraham Escareno

Paralegal—Midwestern Office, 2007-2009

Alexa Bertinelli

Staff Attorney—District Court Self-Help Center & Metropolitan Offices, 2012-2018

Alycia Elwood Stack

Staff Attorney—Southern Maryland Office, 2014-2018

Amber Perrelli

Staff Attorney—Anne Arundel County, 2016-2018

Amy DiBiasio

Staff Attorney—Montgomery County, 2014-2016

Amy Hennen

Staff Attorney—Intake Services Unit, 2014-2015

Althea Landymore

Intern & Volunteer Paralegal—Anne Arundel County, 2009-2012

Paralegal—Anne Arundel County, 2012-2020

Angele Gaylord

Staff Attorney—Southern Maryland, 1996-1997

Anishah A. Cumber

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2005-2008

Ann Kehinde

Staff Attorney—Northeastern Office, 1987-1994

Ann Lembo

Staff and Senior Attorney—Baltimore County, 2004-2008

Chief Attorney—Baltimore County, 2008-2015

Anne Haffner Hurley

Staff Attorney—Long Term Care Assistance Project, 2007-2011

Director—Long Term Care Assistance Project, 2011-2016

Aquanetta Knight Momyer

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2000-2005

Supervising Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2005-2013

Arlene F. Lee

Staff Attorney—Eastern Shore Office, 1988-1994

**Alumni, Maryland Legal Aid
(August 6, 2020)**

Audrey Straight

1982-1988—Staff Attorney-Frederick, Anne Arundel & Prince George's Offices
1990-1991—Temporary Attorney-Montgomery County Offices

Barbara Samuels

Staff Attorney—Baltimore City, 1983-1993

Briana Morris

Paralegal—Metropolitan Office, 2016-2018

Carlos M. Colindres

Paralegal—Metropolitan Office, 2009-2018

Carol Yoder

Staff Attorney—Anne Arundel Office, 1990-2005

Carolyn Mills

Law Clerk—Metropolitan Office, 2016-2017
Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2019-2020

Carolyn Rodis

Staff & Managing Attorney—Baltimore and Howard Offices, 1975-1981

Carol Carnett

Paralegal, Staff Attorney, & Library Consultant—1977-2006

Carroll Kilty

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2005-2008

Cate Hodgetts

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2007-2009

Chadwick C. Duran

Supervising Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2000-2004

Cherie Jones

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 1998-2015

Cheryl Hystad

Staff & Managing Attorney—Housing and Consumer Law Unit, 1984-1995
Director of Advocacy, 2007-2013

Christine Nguyen

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2013-2015

**Alumni, Maryland Legal Aid
(August 6, 2020)**

Cora Ganzglass Hume

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2005-2008

Daniel L. Hatcher

Staff Attorney—Baltimore City & Metropolitan Offices, 1997-2000
Assistant Director of Advocacy for Public Benefits & Economic Stability, 2002-2004

Daniela Dwyer

Managing Attorney—Farmworker Program, 2005-2009

Danielle C. Morton

Staff Attorney—Baltimore City and Metropolitan Offices, 1997-1998 & 2000-2003

David Podell

Staff Attorney—Southern Maryland, Baltimore City & Baltimore County, 1991-1999

Debra Gardner

Staff Attorney—Midwestern Office, 1984-1990
Chief Attorney—Midwestern Office, 1990-1999

Diana Marquez

Paralegal—Midwestern Office, 2009-2012

Eleanor Dayhoff-Brannigan

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2014-2017

Emily Alt

Director of Program Development and Compliance, 2016-2019

Emily Harris

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2016-2019

Emily Jaskot

Staff Attorney—Long Term Care Assistance Project, 2011-2016

(Arthur) Eric Peltosalo

Vista Volunteer, Staff Attorney & Managing Attorney, 1972-1981
Member- Board of Directors; Finance & Pension Committee, 2000-2005

Erica Anaya

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 1999-2002

Esther Zelenske

Staff Attorney, Managing Attorney & Chief Attorney—Baltimore City, 1978-1992

**Alumni, Maryland Legal Aid
(August 6, 2020)**

Frank Natale

Director of Advocacy for Income Security, 2012-2016

Franklyn Fragomene

Staff Attorney—Midwestern Office, 2007-2010

Hannah Lieberman

Director of Advocacy, 1998-2005

Deputy Executive Director, 2005-2007

Harriet Robinson

Training and Communications Director, 1980-2001

Harry Lewis

Staff Attorney—Baltimore City, 1985-1986

Managing Attorney—Farmworker Program, 1989-1991

Harvey Morell

Librarian, 1988-1991

Heather Gomes

Staff Attorney—Foreclosure Legal Assistance Project & Metropolitan Office, 2008-2015

Heather Maher Boedeker

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 1993-2003

Heidi Redlich Epstein

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 1995-1998

Janet LaBella

Chief Attorney—Anne Arundel County, 1990-2004

Janice K. Hunter Johnson

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 1998-1993

Supervising Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 1997-1999

Jeff Burritt

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2000-2004

Jennifer Berger

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 1999-2004

**Alumni, Maryland Legal Aid
(August 6, 2020)**

Jennifer Goldberg

Staff & Supervising Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2001-2008
Director of Advocacy for Elder Law and Health Care, 2008-2015

Jeanette Cole

Staff Attorney—Northeastern Office, 2004-2007
Chief Attorney—Northeastern Office, 2007-2012

Jen Heald Kidwell

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2014-2016

Jer Welter

Staff Attorney—Anne Arundel County, 2008-2010

Jessica Rae

Staff & Supervising Attorney
Assistant Director of Advocacy for Children's Rights
1999-2009

Joseph Rohr

Staff Attorney—Administrative Law Unit, 1975-1977
Staff & Supervising Attorney—Housing Law Unit, 1977-1979
Staff & Supervising Attorney—Domestic Law Unit, 1984-1985
Chief Attorney—Anne Arundel County, 1985-1990
Chief Attorney—Baltimore City, 1999-2018

Joe Surkewicz

Director of Communications, 2003-2013

Justin Mixon

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2004-2006

Kate Lang

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2009-2012

Katherine (Lasher) Ballenger

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2002-2007

Katherine Jones

Staff Attorney—Midwestern Office, 1986-2001; 2014-2019
Senior Attorney for Training, 2001-2007
Assistant Director of IT for Law Practice, 2007-2014

Kathleen McNaught

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 1994-1997

**Alumni, Maryland Legal Aid
(August 6, 2020)**

Kathi Grasso

Staff Attorney—Southern Maryland Office, 1982-1986

Managing Attorney—Baltimore City, 1986-1988

Chief Attorney—Baltimore City, 1988-1992

Kathryn E. Wenkman

Staff Attorney—Anne Arundel Office, 2005-2008

Kelly (Perkins) Kildam

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2010-2013

Staff Attorney—Montgomery County, 2013-2016

Ken Wardlaw

Staff & Senior Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 1995-2001

Kevin F. Mitchell

District & Maryland Courts Self-Help Centers, 2011-2015

Kimberly Glassman

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2005-2007

Laila Leigh

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2011-2014

Laura Stack

Staff & Supervising Attorney— Farmworker Program, 2001-2005

Lauren Young

Chief, Supervising, Managing and Staff Attorney, 1987-1998

Leslie Dickinson

Staff Attorney—Southern Maryland Office, 1993-1995

Staff Attorney—Midwestern Office, 2007-2009

Leslie Fried

Staff & Supervising Attorney—Legal Services for Senior Citizens, 1985-1995

Leonard Englander

Volunteer Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2014

Lindsay (Leshin) Brecher

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan and Montgomery County Offices, 2009-2014

Lisa Anderson

Paralegal—Midwestern Office, 2017-2020

**Alumni, Maryland Legal Aid
(August 6, 2020)**

Lisa Piccinini

Staff Attorney—Intake Services Unit, 2015-2017
Senior Attorney for Training, 2016-2018
Staff Attorney—Victim Assistance Program, 2017-2018

Lisa Weintraub Schifferle

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 1999-2005
Supervising Attorney, 2005-2007

Lori Leibowitz

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2011-2015

Lorna V. McCandless-Moss

Paralegal—Metropolitan Office, 2007-2012

Losmin Jimenez

Director of Advocacy for Children & Families, 2014-2015

Lucinda Kimmons

Administrative Assistant, 2000-2003
Paralegal—Metropolitan Office, 2003-2007; 2010-2017

Lyana Hunter (Palmer)

Intern—Metropolitan Office, 2001-2005
Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 1999-2005

Mahasin El Amin

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2010-2014

Mandy Sayers

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 1999-2002

Marianne (Koch) Hendricks

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2007-2012

Marsha Williams

Staff Attorney & Senior CINA Attorney, 2002-2017

Mary Helen McNeal

Staff Attorney—Baltimore County Office, 1987-1992

Mary Paloger

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2000-2006

**Alumni, Maryland Legal Aid
(August 6, 2020)**

Meghan C. Burns

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2016-2019

Melanie Klein

Paralegal—Metropolitan Office, 1992-1995
Skadden Fellow—Metropolitan Office, 1999-2001
Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2001-2003
Senior Attorney—Child Welfare, 2003-2011

Melissa Rock

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2002-2010

Michael Genz

Chief Attorney—Southern Maryland Office, 1983-1985

Nancy Pineles

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 1994-1998

Nathaniel Norton

Supervising Attorney—Statewide Advocacy Unit, 2010-2016

Nicole Jassie

Staff Attorney—Baltimore City and Northeastern Offices, 2006-2012

Pauline Mandel

Staff & Supervising Attorney, 1994-2006

Pauline Wenrich

Paralegal—Southern Maryland Office, 2002-2017

Phillip Westry

Staff Attorney—Maryland Courts Self-Help Centers, 2017-2019

Pooja Shah

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2007-2010

Ramesh Kasarabada

Staff Attorney—Baltimore City, 2005-2007; 2011-2013
Supervising Attorney, 2007-2011

Randi Ames

Staff Attorney—Long Term Care Assistance Project, 2017-2019

Regan Bailey

Assistant Director for Public Benefits & Economic Security, 2004-2007

**Alumni, Maryland Legal Aid
(August 6, 2020)**

Reggie Barker

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2016-2019

Rhonda Lipkin

Staff Attorney—Northeastern Office, 1986-1989

Chief Attorney—Northeastern Office, 1989-1998

Deputy Director, 1997-2005

Rhonda Serrano

Staff Attorney— Baltimore City, 1996-1999; 2003-2004

Supervising Attorney—Baltimore City, 2004-2014

Supervising Attorney—Montgomery County, 2015-2020

Richard North

Director of Litigation, 1976-1979

Robert Bokman

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 1998-2000

Rochelle Bobroff

Staff Attorney—Southern Maryland, 1987-1991

Sarah Anderson

Staff Attorney—Southern Maryland Office, 2015-2019

Sara Wilkinson

Staff Attorney—Anne Arundel County and Metropolitan Offices, 2011-2015

Sarah Coffey Frush

Staff Attorney—Northeastern Office, 2006-2009

Supervising Attorney—District Court Self-Help Center, 2009-2014

Chief Attorney—District & Maryland Courts Self-Help Centers, 2014-2017

Managing Director—Maryland Center for Legal Assistance, LLC, 2017-2018

Seri Wilpone

Staff Attorney—Southern Maryland Office, 1983-1985 & 1999-2001

Chief Attorney—Southern Maryland Office, 2001-2017

Shaundricka Ranel

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2016-2017

Soma Kedia

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2009-2015

Staff Attorney—Maryland Courts Self-Help Center, 2015-2017

**Alumni, Maryland Legal Aid
(August 6, 2020)**

Stephanie Edelstein

Staff & Managing Attorney—Prince George's County Senior Law Project, 1980-1990

(Name Redacted)

Stuart Cohen

Chief of Litigation, 1978-1996

Susan Bennett

Baltimore City & Baltimore County, 1979-1984

Susan Gerhart

Staff Attorney—Maryland Courts Self-Help Centers, 2015-2020

Susan Testa

Staff Attorney—Baltimore City Office, 2000-2012

Staff Attorney—District & Maryland Courts Self-Help Centers, 2012-2017

Swapna Yeluri

Volunteer, 2007-2008

Staff Attorney—Baltimore City & Joining Forces Project, 2008-2016

Tabinda Riaz

Staff Attorney, 2001-2013

Tiara Darby

Office Administrator—Metropolitan Office, 2016-2018

Tracy Chiles McGhee

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 1998-2002

Truth Smith

Staff & Supervising Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 1996-2008

Valerie A. Higgs

Administrative Assistant—Montgomery County Office, 2013-2016

Vicki Gottlich

Manager—Prince George's Senior Citizens Law Project, 1980-1986

Vicki Taitano

Staff Attorney—Metropolitan Office, 2006-2010

Director—Foreclosure Legal Assistance Project, 2010-2015

**Alumni, Maryland Legal Aid
(August 6, 2020)**

Viola Woolums

Staff Attorney—Administrative Law Unit, 2015-2019

**Alumni, Maryland Legal Aid
(August 6, 2020)**

Virginia Rosa

Staff Attorney

Metropolitan, Anne Arundel County and Baltimore City Offices, 2005-2019

Wendy W. Schiller

Staff Attorney—Baltimore City, 1978-1979 & 1980