

**H.R. _____, the “Office for Access to Justice Establishment Act of 2020”
(as modified on November 20, 2020)
Section-by-Section**

Sec. 1. Office Establishment. Section 1 of the bill would establish the Office for Access to Justice within the Department of Justice (DOJ) to be headed by a Director who is appointed by the Attorney General.

Personnel and Funds. Subsection (b) would require the Attorney General to provide all personnel and funds necessary to establish and operate the Office.

Order Of Reporting. Subsection (c) would instruct the Director to report to the Attorney General through the Deputy Attorney General and the Associate Attorney General.

Sec. 2. Duties. Section 2 of the Act outlines the duties of the Director of the Office for Access to Justice. The Director would provide legal and policy advice to the Attorney General to ensure access to justice for under-represented groups in the civil and criminal justice systems, would serve as the Executive Director of the Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable, and would coordinate with other divisions of DOJ to ensure each is considering issues of access to justice including on grant, enforcement, and funding decisions. Additionally, the Director would consult with the Secretary of State and serve as the authority on access to justice before international and multilateral organizations.

Sec. 3. Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable. Section 3 of the bill would require the establishment of the Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable. Headed by an Executive Director, the Roundtable would advocate for civil legal aid and indigent defense as a method of advancing executive agency objectives. The Roundtable would be comprised of representatives of executive branch departments identified by the Executive Director in consultation with the Attorney General and shall convene no less than semi-annually.

Duties. Subsection (b) outlines the duties of the Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable. The Roundtable would improve coordination and promote federal programs that support vulnerable populations, develop recommendations for federal funded programs and policies that improve access to justice, facilitate non-governmental partnerships and advance evidence-based research to promote access to civil legal aid, and must report its activities to the President yearly.

Appointment of Representatives. Subsection (c) would require the head of each participating office to designate a senior Federal official to serve as their representative to the Roundtable.