**Letter to MSPs**

Dear [MSP],

I am growing increasingly concerned about the state of access to our justice system, both here in [constituency] and throughout Scotland.

The Scottish government has long campaigned for a fairer and more equal society. This must include access to justice for everyone, regardless of income – which is where legal aid can be a powerful tool for equality.

Legal aid has enormous benefits on society at large. In fact, one study found that **spending £1 on legal aid generates £8.32 in social value**. However, multiple threats to the legal aid system threaten a full breakdown of equal access to justice in just the next ten years.

**As many as one-third of practitioners could retire within ten years.** There are twice as many legal aid-registered solicitors over 50 as those under 30, signalling a potential crisis in the availability of qualified professionals to help those in need.

It’s easy to understand why solicitors are less interested or able to take on legal aid cases: when the fixed fees system started in 1998, the starting fee for a legal aid case was £500. Today it’s £552. That represents **a 50% decrease in real terms for solicitors’ fees.**

I am particularly troubled by the fact that 100,000 people living in Scotland’s most deprived communities are covered by just 29 civil legal aid firms in total. Even more alarming is that the vast majority, at **almost 90,000, have no local access to a civil legal aid firm** at all. It’s clear that real change is needed.

As your constituent, I urge you to consider the state of legal aid both locally and throughout Scotland. I ask that you advocate for increased funding and fairer compensation for solicitors to ensure that the legal aid system remains robust and accessible for all.

Doing so will encourage more solicitors to take on more cases, increasing the number of people throughout Scotland who can access justice. It will create a more fair and equal society – one in which your income does not affect your ability to be heard in court.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

[Address]