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**Equal Justice Coalition Honors Four Legislators with Beacon of Justice Award**

BOSTON, January 18, 2013 – The Equal Justice Coalition honored four Massachusetts lawmakers with Beacon of Justice Awards at a reception yesterday at the John Adams Courthouse in Boston.

The honorees were selected for their outstanding support of state funding for the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation (MLAC). MLAC makes grants to organizations that provide civil legal services for low-income residents with critical problems, such as domestic violence and eviction due to foreclosure.

Justice Ralph D. Gants of the Supreme Judicial Court spoke at the reception, which also welcomed newly-elected legislators who began their terms Jan. 1.

“I thank the awardees for their support of civil legal aid,” Justice Gants said. “They are champions of justice.”

The awardees are:

- House Speaker Pro Tempore Patricia Haddad (D-Somerset);
- Senate President Pro Tempore Stanley Rosenberg (D-Amherst);
- Rep. Ruth B. Balser (D-Newton); and
- Sen. Brian Joyce (D-Milton)

“We are thankful for these legislators’ extraordinary effort in support of civil legal aid in the Commonwealth,” said Sandy Moskowitz, chair of the Equal Justice Coalition. “They understand the need for the Commonwealth to invest in providing legal services for low-income people facing critical civil legal problems and have been consistent supporters of that investment.”

The awards were presented by representatives of legal aid organizations that serve constituents in each honoree’s district.

“I am very moved to receive this recognition from the Equal Justice Coalition, whose work is so essential for making sure that our judicial system works for all the people,” said Rep. Balser. “I value their partnership.”

“The MLAC provides our neediest residents with critical legal assistance and protects some of our most vulnerable citizens from abuse,” said Sen. Joyce. “The MLAC keeps families in their homes, protects our seniors and offers justice to residents who cannot otherwise afford to have their voices heard. It is an important program for many residents in the Commonwealth and I was happy to support its continued good work.”

“I deeply appreciate this honor from the Equal Justice Coalition,” Sen. Rosenberg said, “especially so because it comes on the eve of our celebration of Martin Luther King's life and legacy. Dr. King said ‘Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.’ I believe that and I gratefully accept this award as a reminder that there is more work to do.”

#### About The Equal Justice Coalition

The Equal Justice Coalition is a collaboration of the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation, Massachusetts Bar Association and Boston Bar Association. It advocates increasing the state appropriation for civil legal aid, which funds programs throughout the state that provide legal advice and representation to low-income Massachusetts residents facing civil legal problems. For more information, visit [www.equaljusticecoalition.org](http://www.equaljusticecoalition.org).

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