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ALEC's SUGGESTED STATE LEGISLATION

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) has just published its 1983-84 Source Book of suggested state legislation. It is being delivered this month to all 7,400 state legislators, 50 governors, state officials, and other policy officials -- complete with an endorsement by President Reagan plus many Senators and Congressmen.

The Source Book contains a compilation of innovative state legislative proposals on a variety of subjects. Based on the success of ALEC's previous Source Books, this year's book is guaranteed to be taken seriously and implemented.

The book contains Idaho's new law eliminating the insanity defense in criminal trials. It provides that a criminal must serve his complete sentence even if psychiatric treatment cures him before his term is up. Public indignation over the John Hinckley verdict has spurred interest in this type of reform.

The book has a Newborn Infant Protection Act, securing the rights of babies whose parents or physicians want to starve or neglect to death. The introduction was written by Senator Jeremiah Denton and is a solution to the ethical/governmental problems raised by the Bloomington baby case, where death was chosen as preferable to life with a handicap.

ALEC's Forfeiture of Drug Profits Act empowers the state to seize not only a criminal's assets used in the commission of a drug-related crime, but also the capital base which was built up by criminal groups with laundered money. Dr. Carlton Turner, director of the White House Drug Abuse Policy Office, points out in his introduction that "incarceration is meaningless if the financial assets upon which the organization depends remain intact."

Workfare is not a new idea, and has been included in previous issues of the ALEC Source Book. The most modern and tested version of a Work Experience and Employment Incentive bill is presented in this year's book, with an introduction by Senator Jesse Helms who points out the need "to preserve the work ethic" in our public assistance programs.

Senator Edward Zorinsky wrote the introduction to this year's "Peace Through

Strength" Resolution, which has already passed 13 states and is more timely than ever since the nuclear freeze has become so controversial. In recommending adoption of this resolution, Zorinsky says, "whatever the outcome of the conflict between Soviet totalitarianism and the forces of freedom, the result will be peace through strength. What is being decided now is, whose strength and whose peace?"

Another model bill introduction was written by Congressman Philip Crane. "Under the present system," Crane says, "most of the tax advantages, or loopholes, are available only to higher income individuals, who then pay little or no taxes at all." The Flat Rate Tax Act, which he recommends, would eliminate this problem.

In introducing the Regulatory Budget Act, Senator David Durenberger says, "It is essential that we at the Federal and State levels work together in a timely manner to establish 'price tags' on our regulatory programs."

Enterprise Zones are a favorite of ALEC members; those are the zones in inner cities which are helped back to economic prosperity by special tax and other advantages. Congressman Jack Kemp, the leading advocate of Enterprise Zones, shows in his introduction how this Act is designed to help the poorest Americans to get back on their feet.

Four previous ALEC biennial Source Books have had an extraordinary record of use in drafting legislation at the various State Capitols. The Balanced Federal Budget resolution in the 1977 Source book was adopted by 18 states. The 1978 ALEC Workfare Act was enacted by 12 states, with another 20 states authorizing demonstration programs.

The Enterprise Zone bill proposed by ALEC three years ago has been adopted by 14 states. Sunset Legislation, State Tax and Debt Limitation Amendments, Tax Indexing, Energy Credits, Drug Paraphernalia Guidelines, Teacher Proficiency, and Crime Victim's Compensation are among the other model bills from previous Source Books which have successfully passed many state legislatures.

The American Legislative Exchange Council is a Washington-based think-tank for state lawmakers. In addition to presenting model legislation, ALEC commissions research projects in areas of particular interest to state legislators and conducts national and regional conferences. Now ten years old, ALEC has an active membership of 1,600 state legislators.