P.S. to the NEWS
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LEGAL SERVICES

One of the strangest anomalies of the Nixon Administration is the way it violates all rules of politics by repeatedly offending its friends in a vain attempt to placate its enemies. Take, for example, the case of Governor Meldrim Thompson of New Hampshire, who was the one who organized support for President Nixon at the last Governor's Conference. Governor Thompson recently vetoed the Federal Legal Services program within his state, but he was promptly overruled by the OEO bureaucrats in Washington who are determined that no one shall interfere with their programs designed to bring about revolutionary social change.

Legal Services is now a branch of the Office of Economic Opportunity. It was set up as a means of providing free legal aid to the poor, but it was quickly turned into a vehicle by which thousands of Government lawyers could spend their time, at our expense, working to change our laws by litigation through the courts and by organizing pressure groups, instead of by the orderly, constitutional process of legislation.

Legal Services lawyers, whose salaries are paid by Federal taxes, have been in the forefront of all kinds of radical activities from busing to abortion. The National Welfare Rights Organization, the National Tenants Organization, Gay Liberation, the American Indian Movement, the United Farm Workers Organizing Com-

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mittee, the Movement for a Democratic Military, the National Lawyers Guild, and other organizations have all been aided under the Legal Services program.

Now, these radical Government lawyers are asking Congress to expand their powers. If the new Legal Services bill -- called the Nelson-Javits bill -- passes Congress, all Governors will be deprived of their right to veto the Legal Services program within their states. This new bill will give some 2,500 Government lawyers $71 million to spend to promote radical change through test-case litigation, lobbying, the organization of pressure groups, and propaganda.

The critical issue is accountability. Why vest power in a handful of unelected bureaucrats to advance their personal notions on important questions of public policy? In addition to other problems, the salaried attorneys are not subject to the market restraint and the need for client responsiveness. When it costs nothing to sue, or appeal, or organize a class action, or a lobbying campaign, it is tempting to do so.

Unfortunately, the staffers who purport to speak for the White House on the Legal Services bill have been pursuing a policy which can best be described as "how to lose friends and alienate people." They have been lining up with the proponents of the Nelson-Javits bill and, at the same time, riding roughshod over the President's supporters who believe that the time has come to put a stop to the way this Federally-funded agency has become a shelter for radical legal agitators to advance their personal notions on questions of public policy.

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