P.S. to the NEWS
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RELEASE: JUNE 12

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LEGAL SERVICES SHENANIGANS

Any idea that the federal Legal Services Corporation is merely a do-good program to provide legal aid for needy people unable to pay for their own lawyers has been dispelled by a frank article in a recent issue of CLEARINGHOUSE REVIEW. Two lawyer-authors, employed by an agency funded by Legal Services, describe how the tax funds and talents so generously provided by the American taxpayers have been used for "social management" through litigation, lobbying, and political activism.

The article tells how those financed by the Legal Services Corporation have always been motivated by an effort to redistribute the wealth in the United States. But because these ideologues functioned in a time-period when the economy was expanding and government was growing even faster, everybody was getting a bigger slice of a bigger economic/governmental pie; and no group was hurt too much.

The tidal wave that started with Proposition 13 and has swept across the country has been a rude shock to those promoting government growth. Now that legislatures and courts are asking, "But where's the money to come from?", Legal Services activists are devising and refining tactics to reach their goals by outmaneuvering the taxpayers.

Here is how the authors of this agency self-evaluation, Alan Rader and Dorothy Lang, advise lobbyists financed by Legal Services Corporation: "To lobby local government effectively, we will have to learn, for a beginning, the demographics of local politicians' districts, their campaign contributors, their voting records, their staff assistants, the social service facilities and agencies within their districts, and labor, church and civic groups within their districts."

Spelling this out in more detail, Rader and Lang urge that federal lobbyists "shift away from a substantial concentration on professional lobbyists at the state capitol to constituent-based lobbying of individual legislators in their home districts. We are going to have to learn how to help clients who wish to conduct the mass

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letter-writing, postcard-sending and button-holing campaigns that other interest groups have used."

Continuing with their plan of action, Rader and Lang urge that "groups of voting constituents will have to begin dogging legislators in their district offices and at their district speeches and appearances. ... We will also need to become proficient at using the media for purposes beyond publicizing cases we file or cases we win."

The authors boast of their past successes such as "through effective use of the media, a coalition of progressive groups in Michigan was able to defeat two of the three regressive tax measures on the November 1978 ballot." Another example was the coordinated filing of 21 lawsuits against 21 California counties, not because these were valid suits, but just to bring political pressure on county boards to force a raise in welfare payments.

Is it legal for taxpayer-financed lawyers to lobby for or against specific legislation or referendums? The Legal Services Corporation Act specifically prohibits "advocating, or opposing any ballot measures, initiatives or referendums."

But Legal Services lawyers found a loophole in the law's fine print: "An attorney may provide legal advice and representation as an attorney to an eligible client with respect to such client's legal rights." So, under the subterfuge of providing "advice and representation" to a "client," Legal Services Corporation uses our tax dollars for lobbying, media manipulation, and politicking for or against ballot measures.

These Legal Services lawyers frankly admit that they are working "toward long-range institutional change," that their goals "are explicitly distributive," and that they are developing "broad legislative and administrative advocacy strategies." The question for Americans is, are we going to continue to allow taxpayer-financed lawyers to connive and politick to defeat the demands of the American people to reduce taxes?

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