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MOVING FROM PROFESSIONALISM TO POLITICAL
ADVOCACY IN THE HUMAN SERVICES--HOW TO
ORGANIZE A SUCCESSFUL STATEWIDE
POLITICAL EFFORT IN YOUTH SERVICES *

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ABSTRACT

The current funding environment makes political advocacy on the part of social work professionals mandatory. The social work literature on political advocacy is reviewed and categorized into schools of thought. The major portion of the paper, however, presents and then analyzes a case study of a statewide youth services association in order to gain more insight into how professional social workers can develop and use more successful political strategies and tactics.

Historically the social work profession has had a love-hate relationship with politics (Alexander, 1982). On the one hand, the profession has been committed to improving direct practice and the development of professional standards. On the other hand, many have argued that the profession should also play a far more visible and political role

within its communities and society (e.g., Dean, 1977, and Stewart, 1981). When the economy is expanding rapidly, human services may be able to get their fair share but during periods of slow growth or stagnation they are prime targets for curtailment (Barbaro, 1978). It will be argued that given the current funding environment, political neutrality or ambivalence toward political activity on the part of social work professionals can only mean more negative consequences for the contemporary victims of social and economic problems. In this context, as Brager has eloquently stated elsewhere, professional social workers must function as advocates for clients and advocacy requires political behavior (Brager, 1968).

To gain insight into what social work has to say about political strategies and tactics that professionals can use, the literature is reviewed and categorized into schools of thought, and these schools are evaluated in terms of how they can help facilitate our understanding of political advocacy. The major portion of this paper, however, presents and analyzes a case study of a statewide youth services association which was highly successful in achieving its policy objectives. Many of the lessons learned from analyzing this case replicate the empirical findings in the social work literature, but a few of the lessons, which are currently not found in the literature, offer clear evidence on how to manage the internal operations of a statewide association. In this respect, the case study serves as a model for other statewide professional associations which seek to further the interests of their client population. (1)

During 1981 and 1982, the author served as a workshop leader for this association. Approximately three weeks were spent in the state over the course of these two years. Besides running a week long workshop for the

membership each year, the author reviewed: all the minutes of the association for the past five years; the state budget; and the legislative record. Informal interviews with 35 of the 48 members of the association were also held. Given the confidential nature of these interviews, the actual name of the state is withheld. The interviews included questions about issues, conflicts within the association, assessments of power and influence among the membership, and detailed accounts of the strategies and tactics used by the association. Even though a pre-designed case study format did not guide this research, every attempt is made in the following pages to present a factually accurate and carefully analyzed account of the activities and internal workings of this association over the course of two years. A strict neutral observer role was followed whenever possible.

The Current Funding Environment

The environment of new scarcity produces among other things organizational instability and uncertainty, reductions in personnel, and service reductions or losses in the quality of services (Hasenfeld, 1983). For example, a survey of twenty-two runaway youth programs in Michigan in 1982 indicated that 94.2% of the programs had experienced budget cuts in the last two years and that of these, 70% had been cut by 15% or more. (2) Additionally, 82.4% of the programs were engaged in major reorganization of their services and personnel, 35.3% indicated cutbacks in services, and 58.8% reported that they had laid off personnel. The scenario represented by the results of this survey is most certainly widespread across the country when one looks at what has been happening for the past few years in terms of the availability of resources for human services. In perhaps the most thorough analysis to date, the Urban Institute detailed

the actual and proposed spending cuts for four years at the national level (Salamon and Abramson, 1982). Their findings indicate that the federal government is reducing its own activities in fields where the nonprofit organizations were active by \$115 billion between FY 1982 and FY 1985 (Salamon and Abramson, 1982, p. xvii). More telling, however is that the nonprofit sector would have to increase its rate of giving anywhere from 10 to 12 times what it has been at its peak, if the gap left by federal cut-backs is to be filled (Salamon and Abramson, 1982, p. 60). The hardest hit areas by federal cutbacks are social service, community development, employment and training, and health care service programs (opposed to health care financing programs). It is unrealistic to expect the nonprofit sector, states, or localities to pick up the slack (Dluhy, 1982). In short, the current funding environment is strained and it may be that way for a number of years. Given fewer resources in the human services, there is likely to be continuous conflict over priorities and needs which translates into reductions in services to clients, cuts in unpopular services and programs, and the underallocation of resources for needy but unorganized clients.

Another critical aspect of the funding environment is that while the federal government is severely cutting back its financial support for the human services, it is at the same time returning more of the responsibility for setting funding priorities to the states and localities without giving them additional revenues to pay for these services. In the past two years, the Regan administration has been instrumental in either the adoption or proposal of sixteen block grants which consolidate 103 different categorical programs (Dluhy, 1982). Block grants by design and purpose shift more of the responsibility for allocating resources to the state and local

level. The issue here is that a new system of allocation is becoming more critical than the highly centralized and categorical one of the past. The states and localities will increasingly set the standards and rules for distributing the diminished federal fiscal resources. If economic conditions had been more normal, it might have been possible to decentralize program responsibility to the functional areas covered by the block grants. State and local administrators would then have been able to maintain existing service levels while also being able to respond to new priorities and needs. However, without constant funding, state and local administrators will have little relief from the pain of denying and cutting back services as overall funding is reduced still further.

In sum, with perhaps a few exceptions, the prospects are poor that either the nonprofit sector or the state and localities will be able to pick up very much of the slack left by the federal budget cuts. Politically, the block grant in conjunction with funding cuts can only mean more conflict at the state and local level which, in turn, will mean that these arenas will increasingly become the dominant place for debates over priorities and needs in the human services. As such, statewide political advocacy will become even more critical as time goes on. The implication is that we need to recognize and accept these shifts in the funding environment and begin to develop well organized statewide advocacy efforts to shape decisions in these arenas. Without more political advocacy on the part of professionals, the cuts could be even deeper and, thus, further reinforce those who are seeking to dismantle the support systems that have taken fifty years to assemble (Stewart, 1981, p. 271).

Literature

One place to turn for direction in developing political strategies and tactics is the professional literature. But, as Sosin points out, literature based on research in social work is anything but rich and diverse on this subject (Sosin, 1983). For purposes of discussion, the existing literature is organized into three different categories and each category is evaluated briefly as to its utility. (3) However, given the dearth of literature in this area generally, professionals seeking to engage in serious political advocacy must be prepared to look closely at other professions and their approaches or learn through trial and error.

The first category of literature in social work is labelled the Admonition School of Thought. These writers, for the most part, remind the profession of its history and commitment to the social and economic problems of its clients (e.g., Alexander, 1982; Barbaro, 1978; Brager, 1968; Cohen, 1966; Dean, 1977; Levey, 1970; and Stewart, 1981). For those labelled as the Admonition School, there is little or no incompatibility between practicing clinically and advocating for the client in a political sense (Briar and Briar, 1982). Stewart's (1981) recent plea for political action captures the essence of this School of Thought:

In my view, social work loses its reason for being if it gives up its basic, traditional values and philosophical commitments. It will lose its professional uniqueness. Social work education then becomes primarily technical training with no more claim to social work positions than other trainees who are technically prepared and possess clinical, planning, or

administrative skills (p. 272).

The important contribution of this School of Thought is that it constantly reminds the profession of its historical mission and ideology. The "call to arms" needs to be periodically made, but beyond this, there is little by way of practical advice as to how professionals can become more effective and how research findings, in particular, can be used to develop more successful strategies or tactics. In the context of developing a statewide political effort, the leadership, at a minimum must be prepared to admonish its membership and raise its level of political consciousness. This School of Thought provides the ideological rationale for political involvement.

A second category is referred to as the Arsenal or Tactical School of Thought. While these writers also admonish the profession, they focus more heavily on what should be done and how to do it (e.g., Mahaffey, 1972; Sharwell, 1982; Thursz, 1971; Thursz, 1977; and Zweig, 1969). Most of the writing in this area, however, appears to be highly anecdotal rather than the result of rigorous research or the result of carefully described and analyzed case studies. Thus, comments about what things go into making an effective lobbyist, how to prepare and deliver successful testimony, and the steps necessary to develop comprehensive political strategies are presented to the professional as practical advice. The utility of the Arsenal or Tactical School is that it leads the way by illustrating how professionals can become involved and what kinds of things they can do. Its major limitation is that it offers advice that is not specific enough to the political situation or circumstances in which professionals may find themselves. At the worst, the professional may waste a lot of time on activities that are either meaningless or

aimed at the wrong people or targets of influence. At best, the professional may raise his/her sense of political efficacy and be encouraged to broaden his/her involvement in the political process. Without a more careful assessment based on research, the professional is still left in many situations with little else than trial and error as a guide. As discussed elsewhere, without better knowledge of strategies and tactics and their probable impacts, professionals behave more like "fire-fighters" than like "pragmatic brokers" who know how to use their resources efficiently and effectively (Dluhy, 1981). Recent research on the political involvement of professionals sheds some light on the general observation that social work professionals are fairly ineffective in the political process (Wolk, 1981; Mathews, 1982). While these studies find that the level of political activity is higher among social than the general population and similar to other types of professions, these high levels of activity do not guarantee political influence or legislative effectiveness. One interpretation of these findings is that influence and effectiveness are much more a product of the use of adroit strategies and tactics than the result of any overall level of political activity engaged in by professionals. As both Epstein (1968) and Rothman (1974) point out, social workers are far more comfortable with conventional professional roles like expert testimony, writing letters, and signing petitions than they are with more radical roles which might involve some kind of protest. Or as Wolk (1981, p. 287) documents, social workers are more likely to discuss issues, join organizations with political objectives, and write letters than they are to: attend political meetings; get involved in political campaigns; or make monetary contributions to candidates or parties. In short, political activity, per se, does not guarantee success. What is needed is a more careful and rigorous

assessment of which strategies and tactics to use.

The third category of writers is labelled as the Outcome School of Thought. This body of knowledge draws upon either carefully reported case studies or other types or research to establish more concretely the linkages between strategies, tactics, and outcomes. The recent literature in this area is the most helpful because it not only is suggestive of the kinds of strategies and tactics that can be used, but it also focuses on which types to use under differing conditions. As the dialogue among professionals continues, the critical questions that remain are--who is responsible for deciding what is to be advocated, what level of advocacy is appropriate, and what strategies of influence will be adopted? These questions cannot be answered confidently without a careful assessment of what has worked and what has failed in other situations. The Outcome School of Thought using research findings suggests the following generalizations about what kinds of factors lead to successful outcomes. (4)

1. Successful legislative strategy is contingent primarily upon the proper timing, the building of a coalition of support ahead of time, the offering of mainly incremental and feasible solutions, and the ability to maintain the visibility of issues over time (Dear and Patti, 1981).

2. Professional organizations that are highly successful in both the legislative and bureaucratic arenas have the following characteristics: They have a small leadership group which decides on and implements strategy in the name of the larger group; they have an effective communication network within the member ship; and they have some kind of professional staff and/or skilled lobbyists

representing them (e.g., Abrams and Goldstein, 1982; Dempsey, 1982; and Whitaker, 1982).

3. Those representing the professional organization are most successful when they use tactics which build up their credibility and reputation over time. Some of the more important tactics are; interacting frequently and regularly with legislators and bureaucrats; supplying legislators and bureaucrats with much needed technical and political information; and carefully monitoring the day to day activities of the policy development and implementation process (e.g., Bell and Bell, 1982; Mathews, 1982; Smith, 1979; and Wolk, 1981).

4. Finally, when making their case, those representing professional organizations are more successful when they portray the client groups they work with in the least stigmatized way, when they demonstrate that the programs they use to help these client groups are cost effective and efficient, and when they mobilize the geographic constituency of the elected representative (e.g., How, 1978; Humphreys, 1978; Rothman, 1974; and Smith, 1979).

Taken together, these generalizations about strategies, tactics, and outcomes offer more definitive and clear advice to potential political advocates than either the Admonition or Arsenal/Tactical School of Thought. While each school of thought performs a function for the larger social work profession, the Outcome School is definitely the most promising and has the most utility at this time.

The Setting of a Statewide Youth Services Association

The association represents 48 different youth service agencies. Most of these are

nonprofit agencies which provide some combination of residential treatment, counseling, and advocacy services for youth in the state. The association is an organization which performed primarily educational and social functions for its membership up until two years ago. While it met quarterly and published an annual report, the association rarely, if ever, entered the political thicket. While some of its members occasionally lobbied behind the scenes for particular causes, the association was not in the habit of doing things like taking formal political positions, organizing lobbying campaigns, or even courting influential politicians or bureaucrats. This organization was one with an extremely low level of political consciousness and activity. Most members seemed more concerned with the professional image of the association and what they could do to enhance that image. A review of the minutes for the association (1975-1980) confirmed the observation that it was primarily concerned with professional issues of practice, the licensing and certification of service workers, and the upgrading of training for its membership.

Until 1980, the legal and funding environment for youth services in the state appeared stable. Few changes had been made in the laws governing youth in the state for more than a decade and while overall funding for youth programs remained very low during this same period, it was at least constant (with the normal inflationary increases each year). Under these circumstances, the membership of the association seemed content to pursue issues of professional practice.

Two important events transpired during 1980 and 1981 which influenced a few in the association to pursue a far more active political agenda. First, the long standing Director of the State Department of Human

Services (which had jurisdiction over youth services) indicated his wish to retire. His "iron grip" over the social services budget for the past twenty years was now going to come to an end and a few of the members of the association felt that the legislature and the career bureaucracy would now have more of a chance to influence priorities and resource allocation than ever before. Secondly, the first round of federal budget cuts was now being felt at the state level and the uncertainty as to whether youth services would be able to maintain its previous budget allocations was real. While the state had survived quite nicely the economic slumps of the 1970's, by 1981 the state's cash flow and unemployment rate had become a very serious problem. The state budget surplus was gone by 1980 and the drain on the state budget created by the higher unemployment rate put the state in a budget cutting mood. These factors created an opportunity to upgrade youth services in the state, but the real mood of the association seemed to be more one of how to survive over the next few years rather than how to expand the domain of youth services.

The first strategy used by the activist members in 1981 was to actively politicize the membership. An outside consultant was hired to provide a week long workshop on political advocacy which was attended by 90% of the members. After the workshop was completed, an advocacy strategy committee was appointed by the president of the association to develop a comprehensive political strategy. While there was substantial resistance to offering the workshop and setting up the advocacy committee, the activists were able to convince enough of the membership that it was at least worth a try. This resistance was overcome in the following ways. The activists consisted of five social workers who had been with the association since its beginning (three of whom had served as president of the association).

They were by reputation and experience leaders in the field of youth services in the state. They also had previous political experience and were not shy about political involvement. Most importantly, however, was the fact that they were respected by the full membership. This respect and admiration allowed them to successfully admonish the membership by appealing to them in both the formal meetings as well as informally through individual conversations. Thus, the activists raised the consciousness level of the membership but left the development of the detailed action plan to the advocacy strategy committee. Within eighteen months the advocacy committee not only developed but successfully implemented a broad plan of action. While the committee could not take all of the credit for changes in the youth services field in the state, they certainly provided the impetus for and the facilitation of what later occurred.

(5) At the end of 1982, the funding of youth services had been increased by 42.1% over the previous budget year, the first time funding had increased by anything more than inflation in the last decade. Additionally, a new Commission on Children and Youth was established to: monitor what the state was doing in these areas; fund experimental or pilot programs; and improve research and knowledge dissemination on critical issues in practice. To add icing to the cake, one of the members of the association, who was one of the early activists, was appointed as the executive director of the Commission. There was also a major review and subsequent revision of the state statutes affecting youth and their status in the state. Finally, the association was successful in influencing the chairman of the major committee handling youth issues in the state legislature to introduce two important pieces of legislation. Given the previous actions in youth services, the association had accomplished a considerable amount in a short period of time. They had not only

politicized their own membership, but they had organized it in such a way that it was capable of exerting influence in both the legislative and bureaucratic arena at the state level. The remainder of this paper illustrates the approach they employed and the lessons to be learned from this case.

The Operation of a Model Statewide Association

The advocacy strategy committee agreed that to avoid elitism and divisive factionalism, membership on the committee would change each year. Six people were initially appointed to the committee. It was further agreed that the committee would meet regularly (especially during the legislative session) and be responsible for: The action plan; the coordination and interaction between the various work groups; and overall quality control. Quality control refers to the continuous evaluation of how the action plan was working. So as to not overburden the committee, tasks such as the planning of specific events, writing position papers or testimony, and mobilizing the membership when necessary were left to other work groups. This allowed the committee to concentrate on the action plan and its implementation. In practice, the group was small enough to meet frequently (at least once a week) and coincidentally operate largely through a consensus of opinion. The fact that the members of the committee were all within a reasonable driving distance of the state capitol made the regular meeting schedule possible. Members of the association from more remote areas of the state were encouraged to join work groups which did not require frequent face to face meetings. Further, it was agreed (by the full membership) that on major issues or pieces of legislation, the entire membership would vote on a formal resolution taking a position. Beyond this, the membership delegated

authority to the committee to plan and oversee the advocacy effort.

The president of the association, with the advice of the advocacy committee, also formed six ad hoc work groups (see Figure 1). These work groups were given specific tasks to perform and asked to report on a regular basis to the advocacy committee. Meeting times were left to the work groups and when their assignments were completed, they went out of existence. the goal was to have every member of the organization on at least one work group. This not only broadened participation, but it minimized the notion of "elitism" or domination by a handful of the membership. As it turned out, this approach allowed the membership to buy into the advocacy effort even if they did nothing more than make a few calls. Brief reports from the work groups and the advocacy committee were to be made at all of the monthly and quarterly organizational meetings to heighten the level of interest in the advocacy effort. After a while, even the most apolitical of the membership began to take pride in the overall effort. This experience illustrates that the socialization (through participation) of the membership should not be ignored in any advocacy effort.

Figure 1 identifies the principal activities of the work groups. Given the geography of the state, it is important to remember that the people who lived in remote areas and who could not meet frequently were assigned to work groups and tasks that were able to be done in their home areas. As a result, many members who had never done anything except attend the quarterly meetings, wound up giving considerable time to the advocacy effort. Other work groups were developed as needed but the groups in Figure 1 were the major ones.

The agenda for the work groups appears to

be lengthy, but the objective was to get started in each of these areas and to spread the work load across the membership. It is critical to emphasize that the advocacy committee oversaw the operation of each work group and made certain that the completion of tasks was timely and done with the utmost of care. The association also used volunteer undergraduate and graduate interns to perform some of the tasks assigned to the various work groups mentioned above. Overall, the committee did not let the work load gravitate to four or five people. Instead, there was widespread membership involvement in the advocacy effort. The evidence is that every member was on at least one work group and some were on as many as three. Interviews also revealed that during the legislative session (January-June) members spent anywhere from a minimum of two hours a week to a maximum of thirty hours on the advocacy effort with the average being around six hours per week. While the association toyed with the idea of hiring a part-time staff person in the capitol to manage the advocacy effort, finances did not allow it. However, it was agreed that if such a person were hired in the future, he/she would be under the direction of the advocacy committee. It was further agreed that a staff person would never become responsible for either the development of the action plan or quality control. This was always to remain with the committee. The feeling was that a broad based and successful advocacy effort was preferable, because it would not have to rely heavily on a few people who might move, lose interest, or burn out. The philosophy was that tasks could be reassigned and leadership rotated. With only eighteen months of active political involvement, only time will tell whether this philosophy can work over an extended period of time. The notion of developing talented and experienced people throughout the association in the advocacy area so that the association could survive any major

membership changes with minimal effects on its advocacy efforts is certainly laudable.

Finally, the membership earmarked \$2,000 for the advocacy effort in the first year. The money became a line item in the association's annual budget and this guaranteed minimal resources for typing, mailing, postage, phones, etc. Without this small amount, the advocacy effort might not have been able to accomplish as many things as it did. Future plans call for a separate fund raising activity for the advocacy effort every year.

Conceptually, if we think of strategy as the overall approach to changing things in the youth services area and tactics as the activities engaged in by the association to accomplish this, some summary observations are helpful. It is clear that the initial strategy was merely to politicize the membership through consciousness raising tactics. After this was accomplished, the strategy committee agreed that its approach would be to increase the visibility, credibility, and input of the association into the legislative and bureaucratic processes at the state level. They relied on basic tactics such as the use of an effective communication network, the frequent face to face interaction of members with key influentials, supplying influentials with technical and political information, careful monitoring of day to day events affecting youth, publicizing the association and the individual member programs, holding a legislative day in the capitol, and both direct (face to face) and indirect lobbying (i.e., letters, telegrams, position papers). These tactics were carried out by members of each work group but the overall strategy was monitored by the advocacy committee. Given the previous history of the association, an initial strategy aimed at increasing visibility, credibility, and input into the policy process seemed appropriate.

Lessons Learned and the Social Work Literature

In a two day retreat held in the fall of 1982, the membership in conjunction with the author/workshop leader reviewed the activities of the past eighteen months in order to assess what worked, what did not work, and what directions should be taken in the future. There are two perspectives on the lessons that were learned.

The first perspective has to do with how the association and its members behaved in the political arena as they exerted their influence. The second perspective focuses on the internal management of the association as it was engaged in these activities. Using the first perspective, the association learned: that it was better to pursue a legislative agenda that was perceived of as incremental as opposed to radical (a threat to the existing system); that it was important to establish organizational credibility and personal trust in both the legislative and bureaucratic arenas through close and frequent interaction so that the membership and its views would be accepted readily; that the actual tactics used should stress the "softsell" which appealed to decision makers' values, their sense of rationality, and their friendship rather than the "hardsell" which emphasized blatant pressure and/or threats; and that wherever possible, it was better to emphasize the long range objectives for youth in terms of their family situation and potential adult roles and then to connect this to a clear-cut management (program) approach which emphasized performance accountability and cost effective services. In short, these lessons replicated many of the research findings of the Outcome School of Thought discussed earlier. Accordingly, the social work literature which argues for pursuing incremental change, establishing

organizational credibility, using low key interactional tactics, and emphasizing cost effective and efficient programs for clients is given more credence.

The second perspective on the association's experiences documents what can be learned about the successful management of the internal operations of a professional association. Since the literature is less than instructive in this area, these lessons deserve more explication. Together these lessons offer some new ideas about political advocacy.

First and foremost, resources can not be wasted. Many people involved in the advocacy effort will burn out easily and they do not like to be asked to do things that are wasteful or that do not lead to observable payoffs. Carefully plan strategy so that unnecessary lobbying, phone calling, letter writing, testifying, etc., are avoided and only activities that have clear-cut payoffs are pursued. Also, regular feedback needs to be given to the strategy committee so that they know how they are doing in making assignments. Political activity, per se, is not enough. A lot more attention needs to go into managing limited resources so that the potential costs of various strategies and tactics are always being addressed.

Second, in an advocacy effort, there is a role for everyone. Assess talent carefully and assign tasks appropriately. For example, those who do not perform well in front of large audiences or who are uncomfortable with behind the scenes lobbying should be assigned tasks more compatible with their skill. The important thing is that everyone is part of the advocacy effort. One frequent complaint is that a small group of the members seek to dominate the show and do most of the work because they are, in fact, the most political

anyway. The full membership should try to discourage this and emphasize finding a place for everyone. In this case, the activists got the advocacy effort going in the first place, but they readily shared power with other members of the association and this allowed a more consensual approach to internal decision making. The positive aspects of sharing power more widely are the heightened enthusiasm and the increased time that will be given to the advocacy effort by the membership.

Finally, "the problem of dirty hands" can not be avoided in an organization. The best policy is to deal with it directly and develop a position on it. The most critical issue for the association over the eighteen month was "the problem of dirty hands" (Walzer, 1973). Once the association formally decided to engage in political activity, the question became what boundaries needed to be established. Interviews with the members revealed that no one succeeds at politics without getting his/her hands at least a little dirty. In a discussion of tactics, there was little resistance by members to: making phone calls to legislators; occasionally making a personal visit to the office of a legislator or bureaucrat; writing a letter or telegram to a legislator urging support of or opposition to a particular piece of legislation; or even giving expert testimony. But many members indicated that they had considerable difficulty campaigning for political candidates; contributing money to their campaigns, holding a fund raiser for them; and giving legislators the names, addresses, and phone numbers of their board members so that they could be contacted for political purposes (also see Wolk, 1981, p. 287, and Milbrath, 1963, pp. 213-260). These latter tactics illustrate what the group defined as "dirty hands". The dilemma of where to draw the line in political activity is a common one faced by professional organizations. Some political activity takes

little effort and it raises few moral or ethical issues, while other activity may be both time consuming as well as anxiety provoking. It is too easy to simply argue that the ends justify the means. The only solution to this dilemma is to freely discuss the issue, debate it, and where necessary, take a position. In a workable, pragmatic fashion the membership can formally restrict some tactics and agree to be extremely careful in asking people to do things that discomfort them.

In the end, both political advocacy and professional standards can co-exist within professional associations. If there is an overall lesson, it is that "the problem of dirty hands" is unavoidable once an organization decides to enter the political arena, and that honest discussion and debate, not avoidance, is the best approach.

Conclusion

The case offers new evidence on how to manage the internal operations of a professional association. However, the broader message is that even though neutral professional postures are often inbred in social work and other types of direct service training, it only takes a little exposure to the political process to reassure the most reluctant that their worst fears are largely imagined. After some initial admonishment by the leadership, the membership got involved in the advocacy effort and through trial and error saw the direct results of their efforts. This case shows, therefore, how a professional association can move comfortably in a short period of time to a place where political advocacy is as important a priority as professional standards. It also shows that "the problem of dirty hands" can be overcome if professionals will deal with the issue

directly.

The earlier review of the literature further suggests that the research based Outcome School of Thought needs to be expanded if we are to get better information about what works and does not work in terms of political strategies and tactics. Future case studies or other research which connects strategies, tactics, and outcomes could further our knowledge of political advocacy in this area by addressing some of the issues which are raised but only partially answered in this case study.

1. Can professional associations successfully join broader political coalitions in the human services without sacrificing their individual political clout and successes? Or should they maintain their autonomy?
2. Over an extended period of time how can an organization sustain widespread involvement in a political advocacy effort? What incentives or techniques can be used?
3. Can a professional association be more successful if it hires a professional lobbyist or is it better to stick with rank and file members as lobbyists?
4. Is it necessary for organizations to support political candidates financially and otherwise to be successful or can an organization be as effective by using simple persuasion, its reputation, and its visibility in the community; and

5. Finally, are there any inherent advantages to organizations which use more consensual opposed to elite models of internal decision making? Or put in another way, must political strategies and tactics be handled by a few to be successful or can there be more widespread participation in the design and execution of an advocacy strategy in a professional association?

In the end, this case study shows how a measure of commitment on the part of social workers, a sensible organization, and a sound political strategy can go a long way toward improving service systems in this country. In contrast to a perception of social workers articulated by Form (1964, p. 89) close to twenty years ago, there is little evidence in this study that the profession breeds a type that is timid, conservative, unimaginative, and easily co-opted by the tough-minded.

NOTES

1. As this article was being written, 26 of the 51 states currently had some type of statewide youth services association. The other 25 states had no statewide functioning association (Interview with Caroline roft, Director, Runaway Youth Program, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, April 1983). Those states with currently active statewide associations are: Ark., Calif., Col., Conn., Fla., Ha., Ill., Ind., Ia., Mi., Mo, N.J., N.M., N.Y., N.C., Oh., Okla., Ore., Pa., S.C., S.D., Tenn., Tex., Vt., Wash., and Wis.
2. In the summer of 1981, 28 youth services

programs in the state of Michigan were sent a mailed questionnaire asking for information on the impacts of budget cuts on their programs. Twenty-four programs responded. Complete results are obtainable from the author.

3. This categorization of the literature was developed independently by the author. It was derived by looking at all the political advocacy literature and then evaluating the extent to which this literature was based more on research than anecdotal or dogmatic accounts.
4. These are my interpretations of their findings. I have abstracted the major generalizations as I see them.
5. This is my independent judgment given the activities over the last two years. It is based on participant observation, informal interviews, and a reading of the public record.

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Media & Public Relations

- Draft position papers
- Press conferences/releases
- Promote in-depth news stories

Long Range Planning

- Develop model legislation
- Monitor other states
- Compile data on service needs
- Review journals & reports
- Assemble foundation directory

Monitoring & Oversight

- Monitor legislation
- Monitor budget process
- Monitor regulations
- Directory of key actors
- Profiles of key actors

**ADVOCACY
STRATEGY
COMMITTEE**

Talent & Recruitment

- Survey membership
- Recommend task assignments

Communications

- Legislative update
- Special mailings
- Phone bank
- Task assignments

Special Events

- Annual legislative day
- Cocktail parties/
receptions
- Fund raisers
- Annual meeting with
board members