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THE RELATIVE EFFECTIVENESS OF LEGISLATIVE
CAMPAIGNING IN A SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

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ABSTRACT

There are three interrelated strategies commonly used by social workers for coping with the conservative attack on social welfare institutions: client advocacy, electoral, and policy strategies. The paper evaluates the relative effectiveness of the policy strategy when 532 members of a school of social work were asked to write their legislators in support of progressive legislation. Five indicators of the relative effectiveness of this campaign were identified and assessed. The campaign is adjudged relatively effective from the standpoint of enlisting and motivating participants "ready for service or action" (action potential); in implementing a formal plan or organization--a "connected series of operations to bring about a particular result" (organization potential); in activating a leadership cadre for current and future campaigns (leadership potential); and in disseminating information relevant to the campaign (information potential). The evidence on outcome effectiveness -- "for producing a decided, decisive, and desired result" -- was inconclusive. The advantages and disadvantages of the policy strategy are discussed.

"Social work and social services are under seige. Yet, at the same time, social work is being recognized for its necessary and rightful place in society. There is no better time to organize, to demonstrate one's contribution, as when the issues are clear."

Chauncey Alexander, Executive Director, NASW, April 1982 (1)

A concerted attack is being waged against the validity and the existence of social welfare programs by a conservative administration which holds the balance of power in Congress and the White House and receives the support of equally conservative regimes in many states.

After an initial period of stunned disbelief about what was happening, many groups of social workers have moved from a defensive posture to a counterattack. They are in the frontline where they can see the very damaging consequences of conservative public policy for themselves, their clients and constituents. Social programs have been dismantled or reduced; clients in need have been denied benefits or refused services; high rates of unemployment have begun to affect social workers, themselves, as well as their clients; grants in support of social work research, education, and training have begun to disappear; schools of social work are experiencing declines in student enrollments.

There are three interrelated strategies for coping with the situation currently utilized within the profession: client advocacy, electoral, and policy strategies.

Social workers traditionally have employed an advocacy strategy in their work with clients and agencies. This strategy involves the social worker actively in the

defense, protection, and enlargement of the rights of the client to receive services and entitlements, even in the face of agency opposition--a perilous strategy for the worker on some occasions.

More recently, following the lead of Pivan and Cloward, they have invested in an electoral strategy. (2) The electoral strategy consists of massive voter registration among client groups and mobilizing political support for candidates for public office who are in favor of progressive social welfare development. This involves not only the endorsement of candidates and work in their election, but also the necessary followup activity to advise them about key appointments and social issues as well as the monitoring of their behavior in office and informing the electorate. This latter activity blends into the policy approach.

This paper is concerned with the development of a third strategy, the policy strategy, which addresses three programs to be solved in the democratization of the public social policy process: First, how to get critically important social issues on the legislative agenda; second, how to obtain the enactment of progressive policy solutions for these critical social issues; and finally, their effective implementation. (3)

More particularly, we intend to address the question: Can the community of social workers associated with a school of social work provide an effective organizing base for a legislative action campaign?

By "community of social workers" we refer to those associated with the school: students, faculty, staff, alumni, and field instructors. Effective means "ready for service or action, producing a decided, decisive, and desired effect." A campaign is defined as "A

connected series of operations designed to bring about a particular result." (4) An effective campaign is one in which people are motivated to be ready for service or action in a connected series of operations designed to produce a decided, decisive, and desired outcome.

The general thesis we are examining is whether the community of social workers associated with a school of social work will provide an adequate base for mounting an effective legislative action campaign.

In terms of size of membership, accessibility, issue relevance, experience, and organizational expertise, and the availability of volunteer assistance, the organizing base of a school of social work has great unrealized potential. For example, the University of Washington School of Social Work "community" contained 532 students, faculty, and staff without counting active alumni members or associated field faculty, probably another 300 members. It was the most inclusive center for social workers in the state. Its membership included people with long experience and acknowledged expertise in social policy, community organizing, and legislative action. The university complex housed many of the resources necessary to the endeavor: libraries and information, research equipment, meeting facilities, and people already engaged in research, study, and educational experiences related to the subject.

Above all, the members of this community share a common frame of reference growing out of mutual experience and enunciated in the policies of the Council of Social Work Education, the professional codes of conduct of the National Association of Social Workers, and the general principles of academic freedom. These policies sanction the scien-

tific investigation of social conditions and the social problems of people in need and call for a pro-active stance toward improvement and amelioration.

This proposition was put to a test when such a campaign was launched at the University of Washington School of Social Work by a small group of students and faculty calling themselves the Social Welfare Information Project (SWIP). By its name and the scope of the campaign, entitled "Inform Your Legislators," the members of SWIP indicated that they were concerned with the problems of the broader social welfare community as well as those of the School.

The major objectives of the SWIP campaign were: 1) to inform the 532 students, faculty, and staff about current legislative issues through ACTION ALERTS distributed to their mailboxes in the School; 2) to secure volunteers to assist with the campaign; and 3) to motivate the target populations to write letters to designated legislators in support of the SWIP position on these issues. The ACTION ALERTS and recommendations for action, in general, followed the stated policy positions of the NASW, and they were timed to coincide with coalition efforts to exert collective pressure. For example, the SWIP campaign coincided and reinforced the NASW's urgent appeal: (5)

THE 1983 BUDGET BATTLE HAS BEGUN!

**NASW IS PREPARED TO FIGHT TO THE FINISH
FOR HUMAN SERVICE PROGRAMS**

In the next several months you will be receiving ELAN Alerts on a regular basis which will keep you informed about budget related events here in Washington, D.C. Every time you receive an alert you need to write or visit with your Members of

Congress. We cannot fight the battle here in Washington without your help.

This paper strives to be more than a descriptive case study. It illustrates the systematic evaluation of the action phase of a letter-writing campaign in support of bills on the official public agenda. (6) Information was gathered through the survey process at two times during the campaign: at the start, in mid-April, when participants ere recruited for the action phase, and in late May at the end of this phase (Phase I). Through the careful analysis of the findings, presented in the following section, some conclusions will be drawn about the nature of effective campaigning, the policy strategy, and the potential for basing such campaigns in a school of social work.

FINDINGS

The order of presentation is as follows:

First we present the findings pertaining to the extent of participation and the level of commitment to the campaign. It will be seen: (a) that the campaign reached only a small proportion of the target population; (b) that the level of commitment to the campaign varied among participants; (c) that the level of commitment far exceeded the extent of participation in the campaign; (d) that the extent of participation increased with the duration of the campaign; and (e) that there was only modest achievement of the major objective of the campaign: to produce letters to legislators in support of progressive social welfare legislation. Each of these findings will be discussed in detail together with tabular presentations of the data.

The second phase is the analysis and explanation of these results. We report the reasons given by the participants for writing or not writing letters. We also examine selected factors in the personal background and prior experiences of the participants in order to determine who was involved in the campaign as leaders, actives, followers, or informants. These data are also useful in constructing an explanation of the results as well as in forming predictions for what can be expected in future campaigns.

Finally, we comment on the relative effectiveness of this campaign, utilizing the suggestions of participants and ideas about the methodology of evaluation of campaign strategies generated during this effort.

Agreement to participate

The campaign was directed at 532 persons with mailboxes in the School of social Work. Table 1 presents the numbers (in brackets) and the proportions of persons involved in the campaign for each of the five sectors of the target population: students in the undergraduate, masters and doctoral programs, faculty, and staff. The preponderant majority of the target population, 85.5 percent, apparently was not involved in the campaign, although all ACTION ALERTS and information surveys were distributed to all potential participants.

The invitation to participate appeared on a form distributed at the start of the campaign. Respondents were asked to sign this form and check "those statements with which you agree: I would like to be kept informed about the project; I would like to participate in the project by writing letters; I would be happy to help out in other ways to make the project a success; I would prefer not to

receive any further information about the project."

In all, 77 persons -- 14.5 percent of the target population -- were involved during the active campaign period of six weeks (Phase I).

Commitment to the campaign

There is a great deal of difference between an agreement to participate in a campaign and the degree of commitment to the campaign. The agreement to participate is merely the declaration that a person will take part or share in something while a commitment involves a pledge to engage in a specific action in the future.

The degree, or level, or commitment varied among the 77 participants in the campaign. Five levels of commitment are indicated in Chart 1: from "no participation" which represents the least commitment to "volunteer to write letters, provide other help" which represents the most commitment.

Chart 1 shows that at the start, 54 members of the target population of 532 stated that they intended to participate in the campaign in one or more of the indicated ways. Only eight persons would not commit themselves in advance to writing letters; none were asked simply to provide information during the campaign.

As the campaign continued, a new opportunity to participate was offered when respondents were asked to complete an assessment survey. In addition, some people found that they were unable to honor their campaign pledge to write letters. Consequently, the patterns of participation and commitment became altered.

The campaign recruited 23 new participants over time. The increment came from 13 volunteers who completed the assessment plus ten others who engaged in campaign activities although they had not responded to the original invitation to participate; five of these wrote letters to legislators.

As the campaign enters Phase II, it is estimated that 62 persons will be involved, down by 15 of the 77 original participants, who will have graduated from the School by that time. These future projections will be discussed later in the paper.

Of the 46 persons, who at the start of the campaign pledged to write letters, only 12 fulfilled this commitment, plus the five others mentioned above. Table 2 summarizes the facts and figures. By the completion of the campaign, a total of 17 persons reported that they had written 49 letters to congressmen. Thus 3.2 percent of the target population had been influenced to participate in this campaign task. The letter writers were asked to address two important social issues: support of graduate student loans, and support for the reduction of "wasteful" defense appropriations with the transfer of funds to needed social programs. Sixteen persons wrote 26 letters on the first issue while eight wrote 23 letters on the second issue. Only seven persons responded on both issues.

In terms of the primary objective of the campaign, "to inform legislators about your position on crucial issues affecting social welfare," the results were less than impressive.

How can these unimpressive results be explained and interpreted? We turn, first, to information derived from our assessment survey administered at the end of Phase I.

The survey assessment form contained 45 items pertaining to campaign participation and its importance: scales which allowed the rating of the ACTION ALERTS for clarity and understandability, relevance of the information content for letter-writing purposes, and the utility of letter-writing for producing the desired results; sets of questions designed to elicit the most important reasons for deciding to write legislators or for failure to participate in this aspect of the campaign; personal characteristics of the participants and their political/professional background and experience; open ended probes about how the ACTION ALERTS and campaign organization could be improved.

The analysis indicates: (a) that the campaign was considered "very important" to most participants, both at the beginning and the end of the campaign, when the assessments were made; (b) that letter writers underscored the campaign importance, its consistency with their own belief, and its relevance to the social welfare, in general, as well as their own self-interest; (c) that the ACTION ALERTS received very favorable ratings for clarity or writing, relevance of information content, and the utility of the action for producing the desired results; and (d) that the failure to participate fully in the campaign could be attributed to competing demands for personal time, and a low priority given to writing letters to legislators when one is very busy with other activities. These findings are amplified and detailed below:

The importance of the campaign

At the beginning, and again at the end of the campaign, participants were asked:

"How important do you feel it is to

inform legislators of your opinion about critical issues which affect the social welfare of people living in our community?"

The results were consistent in the two time periods. Only one respondent believed the process was "unimportant." Most respondents felt that the campaign was "very important" (85.7 percent) or "moderately important" (13.0 percent). At the beginning of the campaign, not a single person indicated that they would "prefer not to receive further information about the project." Evidently, those who participated in the campaign assigned it some importance.

This theme is amplified when participants identified from a checklist the three "most important reasons" who they decided to "write a letter." Of the 17 letter-writers, 16 reported:

	No. of <u>persons</u> <u>%</u>	
The action affected the status and wellbeing of people with whom I am concerned or associated	15	93.8
The actions were consistent with my own beliefs	13	81.3
I thought the action would produce the desired result	9	56.3
The action affected me directly; it was in my own self-interest	7	43.8
The actions were consistent with NASW or SWEAC policy	4	25.0

I was confused about what to do. The proposed action helped me to decide what to do	0	-
Other reasons	0	-

The quality of the ACTION ALERTS

Two ACTION ALERTS were distributed during the campaign. Each was designed to present one critical legislative issue and suggest one specific action to be taken. The first Alert dealt with graduate student loans and represented the position of the Social Work Education/Action Committee on the subject. The second supported the NASW position for reduction of defense appropriations with a transfer of funds to social programs.

Both those who wrote letters (N=17) and those who did not (N=16) were asked to rate the ACTION ALERTS on a six-point scale (0-5), with 5 being the highest rating, for clarity of writing, relevance of information content, and utility of the action. The median ratings of the two groups were:

	<u>Clarity</u>	<u>Relevance</u>	<u>Utility</u>
Wrote letters	4.0	5.0	4.0
Did not write letters	4.0	4.0	4.0

These ratings are almost identical for the two groups. Apparently the ACTION ALERTS were considered appropriate and useful for the designated purpose.

Reasons for non-participation

The survey assessment provided the respondents with the opportunity to explain why they failed to participate fully in the campaign through a checklist to be filled out by those who chose not to write letters and through a series of open ended probes. In the listing below, the checklist items are starred with an asterisk and the numbers in brackets refer to the number of persons giving the reason.

The findings allow us to identify and weight seven factors that account for non-participation:

		No. of different respondents (N 14) %
1.	<u>Good intentions- procrastination:</u> *I intended to write, but I was too busy at the time. Later I forgot about it (12). *I did not have paper and stamps on hand (1)	12 85.7
2.	<u>Low priority of legislative action:</u> *I am too busy to write letters to legislators at the present time (10)	10 71.4
3.	<u>Lack of Information about campaign:</u> I did not hear about the campaign (3). I regret that I ignore mass mailings of this type. Would there be a way of personalizing the process of informing people (2)?	4 28.6

4. Uncertainty about the utility of the legislative process:
 The process is irrelevant (2).
 *I don't think I have the expertise necessary to advise legislators (0). *I don't think that legislators pay much attention to letters from people like me (0). 2 14.3

5. Too busy with other legislative action: We were busy lobbying for another issue at that time (1). I phoned my legislator instead (1). 2 14.3

6. Uncertainty about issue:
 *I don't know enough about the issues to have a firm position (0). I don't think that the issue is as important as I claim to myself and others (1). 1 7.1

7. Opposition to position on issue:
 *I didn't agree with the SWIP position on the issue (0). 0 -

These findings tell us that it was not their opposition to the issues at hand, a lack of confidence in their expertise to advise legislators that deterred participation in this campaign. None of the 14 respondents, who provided us with this assessment, cited these reasons.

Rather, the explanation lies in the failure of good intentions and the low priority given to legislative action by these busy people. These two factors were cited by most respondents. About a quarter report that they were not even aware that such a campaign was in progress although at three times during a six-week period they had received information from SWIP in their own mailboxes

prior to the assessment survey. The SWIP alerts and information flyers had been reproduced on colored paper and carried a logo which was intended to set them apart from the flood of other announcements distributed regularly to mailboxes. Even when the SWIP flyers were received by this group, they were set aside for future action, and then forgotten or disregarded.

In this turbulent environment, what kinds of people, nevertheless, respond by taking action?

Who was moved into action by this campaign?

Our knowledge of the personal background and experience of the people who participated in this campaign is limited to items concerning: age, sex, marital status, educational program and status, years in social work, prior experience in writing letters to legislators, three indicators of political activity/orientation, and current activities in this campaign. We have usable data for four categories of participants, a total of 46 persons. For the balance of participants, 31 persons, and the 455 persons, who declined to participate in the campaign, only the information gathered by the School for administrative purposes, is available.

Despite the paucity of the data, three provocative findings emerge from the analysis. These are reported in Table 3. We separate the participants into four categories based on the level of their commitment to the campaign: leaders (N=6): people who participated by writing letters and otherwise helped with the campaign; actives (N=11): people who wrote letters during the campaign; followers (N=16): people who agreed to participate, provided us with assessment information, but wrote no letters; and informants (N=13): people who

declined to participate at the start of the campaign, but provided us with assessment information.

The first finding relates to the program specialization and experience of the campaign participant. Although the School has approximately a 5 to 1 ratio of human service to community organization students enrolled in its master's degree program, the campaign apparently attracted significantly larger proportions of students and faculty associated with community organization and planning. The least committed category of informants contained 87.5 percent human services students. All the other categories included large proportions of students and faculty with a community organization specialization.

Second, leaders and actives not only endorsed the letter-writing strategy in larger proportions than the supporters and informants, but they were also more experienced in writing letters to their legislators: 50 percent of the leaders and 18.2 percent of the actives aid that they corresponded "regularly" with their legislators while about 30 percent of the informants had "never" done so.

Finally, all of the people participating in the campaign have a record of prior political involvement. All reported that they were registered to vote, and that they voted in the last presidential campaign. However, there are significant differences among the categories in the political affiliations and orientations of the participants. All of campaign leaders reported a "liberal left" or "socialist" orientation, while small proportions of the other three categories expressed this orientation. For the most part the followers and informants said they were "non-partisan" or "independent." About a third of all respondents, with the exception of the leaders, were "Democrats." Only one

participant indicated that she was an "independent Republican."

Table 3.
Characteristic of Participant by
Mode of Participation

MODE OF PARTICIPATION

Character- istic of participant	Leader (N=6)	Active (N=11)	Follow (N=16)	Inform (N=13)
---------------------------------------	-----------------	------------------	------------------	------------------

Percent
majoring in
community
organization/
research*

60.0	66.7	60.0	12.5
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Familiarity with
Campaign Strategy

Percent believe
letter writing
campaign is "very
important"

100.0	90.0	93.4	69.2
-------	------	------	------

Percent "never"
write letters to
legislators

-	-	6.3	30.8
---	---	-----	------

Percent "regularly"
write letters to
legislators

50.0	18.2	6.3	-
------	------	-----	---

Political affiliation/
orientation

Percent registered;

voted last presidential election**	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
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Percent Liberal-left or Socialist	100.0	18.2	6.3	7.7
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* Based on response of faculty and students in master's program only.

** Two persons excluded because they were under voting age or not citizens.

In summary, we have examined quite carefully a variety of plausible explanations for the low level of participation and commitment to this campaign.

We are able to reject with some confidence any explanation based on the thesis that there was opposition to the policy positions on campaign issues of campaign strategies. Nor is failure to participate due to ambiguous instructions contained in campaign materials. While some respondents lacked information about the campaign, they did not feel that they lacked sufficient expertise to advise legislators on the issues dealt with in the campaign.

This phenomenon can be explained by a combination of reasons: a low priority assigned to legislative action together with uncertainty about the utility of the letter-writing process; a general unfamiliarity and inexperience with writing letters to legislators, which in busy times and competing personal activities, results in procrastination and failure to honor campaign promises.

THE RELATIVE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CAMPAIGN

We now return to the first issue raised in the paper: Can the community of social workers associated with a school of social work provide an effective organizing base for a legislative action campaign? In order to answer this central question it was necessary to devise several indicators of the relative effectiveness of a legislative campaign.

The first three indicators are embodied in the definition of campaign effectiveness cited in the first part of the paper.

First, it is said that an effective campaign must be capable of enlisting and motivating participants "ready for service of action." This is called the action potential, and it is formally defined as the proportion of the organizational base actually participating in the campaign. The campaign's action potential will be discussed later in this section.

Second, it is said that an effective campaign must be capable of implementing a formal plan of organization--"a connected series of operations to bring about a particular result." This is called the organization potential. In general, this is an estimate of how well the organization has achieved its stated objectives. From the foregoing analysis, it is apparent that ACTION ALERTS were prepared, produced, and distributed throughout the School of Social Work. A systematic assessment of the effort indicates that the events were completed in a scheduled time period and coordinated with others engaging in a similar effort. Thus, the plan of organization was accomplished.

Third, it is said that an effective campaign organization must be capable of "producing a decided, decisive, and desired result." This is called the outcome poten-

tial. The campaign was intended to produce support by specified legislators in line with the SWIP position on particular issues. Most of our correspondents had not yet received replies from the legislators by the time of the assessment survey. For perusing the early returns, it can be seen: (a) that the letters apparently were respectfully and appreciatively received by some of the legislators to whom they were addressed; (b) that most replies were preformed position statements: they failed to inform the writer about how legislators voted on specific bills, or whether our letters had influenced their votes. While the issues received a modicum of support, the results of the campaign were hardly "decided" or "decisive." In short, we lack the information needed to make an appropriate assessment of the outcome effectiveness of the letter-writing campaign.

However, the data can be combined into useful indices of the action potential and two other operational indicators of the relative effectiveness of the campaign: its informational potential, and its leadership potential. In this analysis, we are asking: Effectiveness for what purposes? And: effectiveness for whom? The results of this assessment are summarized in Table 4. We deal with both the past experience and the future prospects for effective campaigning in a school of social work.

Table 4
The Relative Effectiveness of the Campaign

Indices of relative effectiveness	<u>Phase 1:Spring</u> 1982	<u>Phase 2:Fall</u> 1982
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	Start	End	Start	End
	(532)	(532)	(400)	
Action potential	7.6	3.2	3.5	--
Information potential	10.1	14.5	15.5	--
Leadership potential	1.9	1.0	1.3	--

Action potential. The action potential refers to the proportion of the organizing base actually participating in the campaign. At the start of Phase I we did not have the information for such a behavioral index of the action potential. Therefore, we use a simple declaration of intent to participate, which was 7.6 percent of the target population. By the end of Phase I we knew with certainty from our survey results that only 3.2 percent of the target population had engaged actively in campaign activities. Our estimate of 3.5 percent for the start of Phase II is based on three assumptions: (a) that a similar campaign will be organized in Fall, 1982; (b) that the target population will number 400 -- this figure is consistent with enrollment projections; and (c) that all of the prior participants will continue except for 15 graduating students.

These measures of the action potential can be useful for campaign organizers in many ways. They provide a realistic estimate of the number of persons likely to be recruited through such efforts. They specify a baseline against which future efforts may be evaluated. They provide quantitative information necessary in planning workshops and training sessions. Finally, by focusing attention on the modest achievements accomplished with this

strategy of legislative action, questions are raised about possible alternatives for achieving the same or better results.

From the detailed analysis of the characteristics of participants, we now know that this campaign strategy recruited more participation and greater commitment among those with community organization background and more experience in writing letters to legislators. This key information can be instructive to campaign organizers in their modes of recruitment and in the scheduling of training.

Information potential. The information potential refers to the proportion of the organization base actually known to have received information disseminated by the campaign. One objective of the campaign was to inform the entire target population (organizing base) about current legislative issues through the ACTION ALERTS distributed throughout the school. Although we know that such information was placed in each mailbox, we do not know whether it was noted and read; certainly it was not acted on by the 455 persons who chose not to inform the campaign organizers.

From the survey response, we are certain that this information reached 54 persons, 10.1 percent of the target population, at the start of Phase I. By the end of Phase I, 77 persons, 14.5 percent of the target population, had been contacted. This proportion will be 15.5 percent at the start of Phase II, according to our estimating procedure.

Furthermore, from our assessment process, we have a much greater knowledge about the clarity, relevance and utility of the ACTION ALERTS, and about the general information processes used in campaigning. Respondents noted: (1) that more adequate publicity needs

to be given to the campaign in general; (2) that the writing style and information content of ACTION ALERTS could be improved by more effective editing; (3) that the packaging of information could be improved--that background reports on critical issues are needed as well as ACTION ALERTS, and might result in more, and more adequate, letters to legislators; (4) that ACTION ALERTS might be scheduled in such a way that they fit into the busy agendas of letter-writers; (5) that measures could be incorporated to reduce the barriers to actual letter writing, such as staffing a table with information about written communication with legislators; (7) that special effort is required to assure the involvement of different groups such as human service students, staff, and faculty.

Above all else, we learned that the process of campaigning is a dynamic one. Nothing remains the same once campaigning has begun. People become informed by the activity. They choose to participate or not to participate, and there are many modes of participation. New opportunities to participate become evident as the campaign develops. Moreover, as the situation changes, an effective campaign organization must take these changes into consideration.

All of these factors have utility for the organizers and managers of campaigns.

Leadership (management) potential. The leader-ship potential refers to the proportion of the organizing base who volunteered to plan and manage the campaign in addition to engaging in its entral activity, writing letters to legislators. At the start of Phase I, ten persons, 1.9 percent of the target population, volunteered in this capacity. These persons included the actual organizers of the project as well as persons who simply said that they were willing to "help" with the

campaign. By the end of Phase I, there was attrition in this "leadership" cadre to six persons, about 1.0 percent of the target population. It is anticipated that the leadership potential will be 1.3 percent at the start of Phase II.

The estimates of future leadership potential are probably low. In the first place experience during the initial phase can be utilized to overcome problems and difficulties in campaigning and incorporate all volunteers into some phase of the process. A systematic plan has been instituted for the progressive development of the campaign in the fall, including an Action Research Workshop for which eight students are already pre-registered. In addition, the fiscal crisis that confronts social welfare and social work education is not abating, thus continuing to supply the motivational imperative that evoked the campaign in the first place.

CONCLUSIONS

As this phase of the campaign draws to a close, there are several disquieting questions for which we have no satisfactory explanations:

The campaign failed to activate 455 members of the social work community which we studied, about 85 percent of our target population. Why is this so? Do they share the opinion of one frank faculty member who commented that letter writing to legislators is an "irrelevant" process? Do they reflect the belief of one human services student who chose not to write letters because "I don't think that the issue is as important as I claim to myself and others." Or are they in the category of students and faculty who had good intentions, procrastinated, and then

forgot their campaign promises?

Our findings show that this campaign was effective in influencing four out of five persons who reported that they corresponded "regularly" with their legislators, and about 40 percent of those who wrote letters "sometimes". It was unsuccessful in moving the handful who "never" do so. In which category do the 455 non-participants fall?

Almost all of our campaign participants are politically active at election time: they are registered and vote in the presidential elections. Only 40 percent indicated their political affiliation was "Democrat"; one was an "independent Republican"; the balance were "independent", "non-partisan", "liberal left", or "socialist". How can periodic political awareness become transformed into every-day activity to influence the conduct of democratic policy making? Are the non-participants satisfied with the policy directions that are current at the present time? Are they cynical or complacent about what the future holds in store for them and the people they work with? Is policy work to be deferred to those few social workers who have a special interest in it?

About a quarter of the community organization students participated in the policy work of the campaign as contrasted with about seven percent of the human service students. Are these differences in participation the result of self-selection into the program or are they influenced by the content of their social work education?

We have proposed the thesis that the community of social workers associated with a school of social work could provide an effective organizing base for a legislative action campaign in opposition to the conservative attack on social welfare programs

and policies now taking place throughout the nation. We gave many reasons why this should be so, including: (1) The programs and values which schools of social work espouse are the central focus of the conservative attack; (2) The school includes a concentration of people, resources, and expertise necessary for organizing and conducting such campaigns; (3) There is a shared frame of reference with respect to the scientific investigation of the social conditions and problems of people in need, and a commitment to a pro-active stance toward improvement and amelioration of the social welfare.

We have provided an empirical test of this thesis in one school of social work and evaluated the results. While the current achievement is modest, it is sufficiently encouraging for us to continue.

This paper represents an effort to increase the effectiveness of the policy strategy. This work is central to and supportive of the other two strategies that we described in the beginning of the paper. Through the policy strategy, programs and standards are established which guide client advocacy; it helps to determine the criteria by which candidates are evaluated for electoral support. Policy work can go on throughout the year without reference to party politics or to periodic electoral activity. Its arena of action is not limited to the enactment of law; it also can be used to influence administrative and judicial decisions. Above all, it keeps the solution of critical social issues uppermost on the political agenda.

For these many reasons, serious attentions should be directed by social workers toward the improvement of this action strategy. For their own protection as well as the progressive development of social welfare

institutions, social workers must become involved in effective policy work and legislative action.

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TABLE 1.
Participation in campaign by level of commitment and school section

Level of Commitment to campaign	Total (532)	Percent involved by school section				
		Undergrad (145)	MSW (279)	Ph.D. (20)	Faculty (58)	Staff (30)
None-no partici- pation (N=455)	85.5	89.6	83.5	80.0	84.5	90.0
Request infor- mation only (N=8)	1.5	1.4	1.4	--	1.7	3.3
Provide infor- only (N=13)	2.4	2.1	2.2	5.0	3.5	3.3
Volunteer to write letters (N=46)	8.6	4.1	11.1	15.0	8.6	3.3
Volunteer to write letters, provide other help (N=10)	2.0	2.8	1.8	--	1.7	--

CHART I.
Level of Commitment by Phase of Campaign

STATEMENT OF CAMPAIGN INTENTION	Start of PHASE I (N=532)	No partici- pation	Record of Campaign Behavior				
			Request info	Provide info	Write letters	Provide help, write letters	
No partici- pation	478	455	--	18	5	--	
Request infor- mation	8	6		2			
Provide infor- mation	-						
Write letters	36	22		8	6		
Provide help, write letters	10	3		1		6	
END OF PHASE I		486	-	29	11	6	
START OF PHASE II (N=400)		338		26	31*	5	

* Includes 9 letter writers and 22 persons who pledged to write letters

TABLE 2.
Number of Letters Produced by the Campaign

Level of commitment to	Number of persons (532)	Total Number of letters written	Number of Letters Written				
			0	1	2	3	4 +
None: no partici- pation (N=79)	455	X *					
Request info only	18	0	8				
Provide info only	13	0	13				
Volunteer to write letters	46	31	35	3	2	3	**
Volunteer to write letters, provide other help	10	18	4	1	4	1	***

* Information unknown, all other data based on survey information
 ** 16 letters were written by three persons
 *** 9 letters were written by one person