

**POLITICS & GOVERNMENT**

*Euthanasia  
Made Easy*

"How to Terminate a Public Policy: A Dozen Hints for the Would-be Terminator" by Robert D. Behn, in *Policy Analysis* (Summer 1978), University of California Press, Berkeley, Calif. 94720.

Terminating a government program is never easy. It requires a strategy at least as elaborate as that used to launch the program in the first place. Certain rules should be followed, says Behn, an associate professor at Duke University. Among them:

Don't give advance notice—it only gives the beneficiaries and ideological supporters of the program time to mobilize political opposition. In January 1975, for example, President Ford decided to tell Congress in his February budget message that he was eliminating the White House Office of Telecommunications Policy. His decision was reported in the *New York Times* on January 16, and the President was forced to reverse himself in the face of stiff congressional opposition.

Focus attention on the harm caused by the policy. For example, when Jerome G. Miller, commissioner of Massachusetts's Department of Youth Services, wanted to close that state's reform schools in 1975, he focused public attention on the evils of those institutions rather than on the issue of how to handle delinquent children.

Avoid legislative votes. Why? Because a move to kill off a program is likely to be dealt with by the legislators who first helped to develop the program, and because legislative bodies facilitate compromise.

Recruit an outside terminator as program boss. (The Nixon administration named Howard J. Phillips as acting director of OEO—the Office of Economic Opportunity—in January 1973 for the sole purpose of dismantling the agency; to a large extent he succeeded.)

Do not encroach on legislative prerogatives. (Nixon failed to follow this rule and found himself confronting Congress over his failure to submit Phillips' name for Senate confirmation, rather than on the substantive issue of OEO's usefulness.)

Finally, Behn notes, there are ethical considerations: "If the termination of a public policy involves the abrogation of a government commitment . . . the terminators have an obligation to provide the policy's constituency a smooth transition to a benefitless future."

*Our Hydra-Headed  
Attorney General*

"Reorganizing Politics out of the Department of Justice" by Mitchell Rogovin, in *American Bar Association Journal* (June 1978), 77 South Wacker Drive, Chicago, Ill. 60606.

Since 1900 many a U.S. president-elect has appointed his political campaign manager to the post of U.S. Attorney General. This made the appointee the nation's chief law enforcer and counsel to the President, as well as political adviser, patronage dispenser, and re-election campaign manager designate. (Among such appointees: Herbert Brownell,

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Robert F. Kennedy, and John Mitchell. Presidents Johnson and Carter broke with the tradition.)

This practice, says Rogovin, a former U.S. assistant attorney general, "places tremendous strain on the Justice Department's capacity to administer justice evenly and on the public's perception of the quality of justice administered."

There are more than 300 presidential appointees within the Justice Department, and the patronage system also is commonly used to fill some 1,700 attorney jobs in the 94 United States attorneys' offices around the country.

Rogovin urges that the Department be depoliticized. He would bar the Attorney General, the Deputy Attorney General, the solicitor general, and all assistant attorneys general from any political activity. Further, all U.S. attorneys and assistant U.S. attorneys should be made part of the career legal service. Finally, the Attorney General, as chief prosecutor, should not have the responsibility to "recommend, screen, and then defend the administration's appointments to the federal judiciary," as is now the case.

Only 8.3 percent of the Justice Department's \$2.3 billion budget for fiscal year 1978 is spent on general legal activities, while about 30 percent is devoted to grants given by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration and 10 percent to the Bureau of Prisons. Arguing that "public confidence in the impartial administration of justice is waning," Rogovin would also separate the Department from all correctional functions and from the politics of grant-making.

*Keeping the Books*

"Are We Starving Our Libraries?" by  
Clint Page, in *Nation's Cities* (July 1978),  
1620 Eye St. N.W., Washington, D.C.  
20006.

Across the United States, urban libraries are cutting staffs, reducing hours and services, and buying fewer books and other materials because of inflation and reduced budgets, writes Page, associate editor of *Nation's Cities*.

Since 1967, the average price of a book has gone from \$8.43 to \$18.03, while magazine subscriptions have risen from an average of \$8.03 to \$24.59. Tax support is shrinking at a time when library administrators must remodel their buildings (many of them architectural landmarks) to make them more energy efficient and more accessible to the handicapped.

Large, urban libraries, says Page, serve whole states and entire regions (4 percent of the country's libraries meet 25 percent of the rural libraries' needs for interlibrary loans). Yet, state support of local public libraries is lagging. Despite the fact that libraries are educational institutions, state governments across the nation provide 43.6 percent of the financial support for public schools but only 12.9 percent of the support for public libraries.

Page urges immediate federal help in the form of adequate funding