

Public Interest Law Firms

Since the late 1960's "public interest law firms" have challenged government's actions in many areas. Some 75 of these have been established including Ralph Nader's Public Citizen Litigation Groups, National Resources Defense Council, and the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund. Together these firms employ about 300 full-time lawyers. Their budgets exceed \$10 million a year. Much of the effort seems to result in impeding business activities in the name of environmental protection.

The Pacific Legal Foundation (PLF) was established in 1973, in Sacramento, California, to counteract the activities of the above firms by supporting the free enterprise system and the traditional concepts of private property and competition. It has had many successes. The National Legal Center for the Public Interest (NLCPI) was established in Washington, D. C., in 1975. It has four principal objectives: (1) To help establish independent regional legal foundations dedicated to a balanced view of the role of law in achieving economic and social progress; (2) To research national legal issues from a litigation point of view and develop strategies to achieve the foundation's objectives in the areas of energy, environment, land use, and government regulations of the private sector; (3) To act as a resource center for regional litigation foundations in obtaining qualified researchers and experts on particular issues; and (4) To identify legislative, administrative and judicial trends likely to result in future litigation.

Under the auspices of the NLCPI, many other regional foundations have been organized, patterned after the forerunner PLF. These foundations will support in the courts the tenets of free enterprise which nobody else appears to be doing in the area of public interest law.

Following a review of the activities of these organizations, the Legal Advisory Committee recommends that MCA adopt the attached resolution endorsing these concepts and their implementation by the NLCPI and the regional foundations.

MCA
EC - 2/8/77
BD - 3/8/77

CMA 037212

RESOLUTION

Whereas, it is essential to the fair administration of justice in public interest cases that the American judicial system receive all relevant facts presented in an objective and professional manner before reaching a determination; and

Whereas, within the framework of our federal-state judicial system, it is desirable for effective representation from the private sector in public interest cases to have the greatest degree of participation in the decision-making process at the state and regional level where the litigation must take place; and

Whereas, for the benefit of all citizens of this country the free enterprise system and the traditional concepts of private property and competition merit advocacy; and

Whereas, the National Legal Center for the Public Interest and the regional foundations it is assisting are dedicated to the above principles

Resolved:

That MCA endorse these concepts and their implementation by the NLCPI and the regional foundations in order that the interest and welfare of the American public may be served fully through responsible spokesmanship in the judicial system.

MCA
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BD - 3/8/77

CMA 037213

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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*Effective June 1, 1977

MCA
BD-3/8/77

CMA 037214