

TO: BILL WITTEN/  
RON RAY

PLEASE READ THE  
FOLLOWING PAGES FROM  
OUR SEPT. JDS BULLETIN.  
THIS IS BOTH REASONABLE  
& WORKABLE.

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# THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY BULLETIN

*Less Government, More Responsibility, And - With God's Help - A Better World.*

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## Saving Our Republic Is Far Easier Than Many Think

by Tom Gow

Millions of Americans are waking up. They are concerned. They see serious problems facing our nation. But in the absence of an obvious solution, the shattering of blissful innocence often leads to frustration and a sense of hopelessness. The problems appear too great, the enemy too entrenched. Drastic measures are rationalized, even futile gestures akin to confronting the Gestapo or KGB at one's doorstep armed with a semi-automatic. Yesterday's innocents become fair game for every crackpot scheme, neutralizing tangent, and trap laid by the enemy.

It is not our purpose here to examine these traps and tangents, only to contrast them with a sound course of action which promises success far more readily than many think.

Saving our nation from an entrenched, well-financed Conspiracy is not easy. It is certainly not as easy as many naive citizens believe who are caught up in the excitement of partisan politics. We cannot save our freedoms by electing any one man, or even a dozen men, to high office. Nor is the solution simply a matter of electing Republicans, as Rush Limbaugh would have his listeners believe.

Following a sound course of action, utilizing the strengths of the system our Founding Fathers gave us and appealing to the natural self-interest of basically good people, is not easy. Nevertheless, it is far easier than many think.

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spitacy has corresponding difficulty in electing, corrupting, or controlling a majority of 435 representatives.

The fact that Congress has been so terrible is a reflection of the ignorance and apathy of the voters rather than of any inherent defect in that body. The House can — and must — be recaptured by determined Americanists.

### Transformed Pressure

What does it take to convince a congressman to vote according to his oath of office to uphold the Constitution? The requirements obviously vary depending on the congressman. We expect that some big spenders and committed leftists will go down in flames at the polls before they will heed constituent wishes and change their stripes. But such defeats help send an important message to the rest. For nothing seems to get a representative's attention more than watching his colleagues fall at the polls for failing to heed the mood of the voters.

However, let us be clear that the majority of effective political action is nonpolitical. Ultimately, informed pressure has to be created so that incumbents will carry the ball. While changing faces from time to time can be healthy, it is unlikely that a majority of principled statesmen could ever be elected. And most certainly not while the understanding back home is shallow. Fortunately, a majority of statesmen is not needed to save our Republic.

What is more important is the informed pressure coming from the folks back home. Representation in

the long run will reflect the understanding (or lack of it) in the district. Even statesmen need support; mere election is rarely enough. We should not expect many politicians to commit political suicide. We'll admire their character if they do. But it is far better to create the understanding in the district that will allow them to make those tough votes and survive in office. By and large the only sound way to obtain a representative who will hang tough in supporting the Constitution is to develop informed pressure from back home.

How much pressure it takes also depends on the issue. During his second term in the House, Congressman Lawrence P. McDonald estimated that there were 35, five or take five, pretty philosophically tough constitutionalists. If the issue were not too tough, he would increase the number up to 70, maybe even 150. But if the issue became extremely tough he would expect only five to seven to stand firm (generally such a poor showing would involve votes against sacred cows rather than votes against new federal intrusions).

### Local Networks

The most efficient way to generate sufficient informed influence day in and day out to counter Establishment pressure from the House leadership and sundry leftist groups is to build an information and action network that reaches enough voters to command the attention of the representative. How big does that information and action network have to be? Much smaller than many sus-

pect. Most congressmen understand that if they aren't reelected, the favors or retributions of the House leadership mean nothing.

In May 1975, Larry McDonald lectured a handful of discouraged visiting civil engineers from his district on how we could win. He pointed out that his election was the result of considerable organized educational work that could be repeated elsewhere to make change possible. To make his point, he got them to agree that there were at least 10 engineers in every district who felt as they do, at least 10 dentists in every district who felt as they do, at least 20 physicians, at least 30 small businessmen, manufacturers, small bankers, merchants in every district who felt as they do. "All right," said Larry, "you find those 70 men, get them together and start working together as a team, working well in advance of election... There is not a district in this country that could not be changed if you worked with the same zeal as though you were the committee to build the golf course for your country club or the committee to build a church structure for your denomination." And they all agreed.

In speeches to JBS members, Larry would further warn against the mistake of embracing partisan politics without first building an informed electorate.

Larry's example for the engineers is even more valid today. Our main obstacle to success has always been the task of assembling a knowledgeable army to combat the enemy. In today's climate, assembling the ne-

cessary forces has become much, much easier. For example, staff members often report finding immediate support for TRIM from businessmen on the East coast. And members are finding it much easier today to get people to listen and to take problems seriously enough to want to reorder some of their priorities in life to help.

Still, building sufficient pressure to change Congress is not easy, and it shouldn't be, not with so much at stake. But the groups with the best opportunities to prevail are those that can appeal to genuine constituent interests with the truth. We are not working against the grain. Our message is generally well-received. And we don't have to sell the public something it doesn't want (more government and slavery) by spending billions in deceptive propaganda campaigns.

But just any information and action network won't do. One of the challenges is to sustain the network. Not only must it start out on the right side of the issues, it must have staying power, be incorruptible, immovable by smear, and organized to maintain its focus on principles over time. It's often easy to create an alliance while passions run high on some particular issue, but as the urgency of the hour dissipates the alliance falls apart. The enemy is very good at hanging in there and waiting for its opportunity. And so are members of the John Birch Society. Eternal work is the price of liberty.

We can thank Robert Welch that we have a John Birch Society whose members are organized around en-

