

Legal program for poor cuts costs

WASHINGTON (AP) - Those \$70 lunches and \$14 "Death by Chocolate" desserts are gone from the executive menu at the government's legal-aid program for the poor.

Expensive hotels, limousine services and first-class travel will become rare or disappear, too.

The Legal Services Corp. has decided to change the generous expense policies for its top officials, yielding to pressure from members of Congress and the federal program's independent watchdog.

The Associated Press highlighted in a series of stories in August and September how the program's executives spent freely while many poor Americans — in need of legal help — were being turned away at clinics across the country because the program lacks sufficient money.

Among the costs that got lawmakers and the inspector general steamed: Corporate directors and top officials received \$18 breakfast servings and \$13 "high tea" ser-

vices in ritzy hotels. Directors shunned the agency's own spacious conference room for an upscale hotel a few minutes away.

Legal Services is financed with tax dollars but given special status as an independent federal corporation, meaning it did not have to follow government-wide expense guidelines.

After the outcry over its spending, the program decided to reign itself in by voluntarily imposing the same expense limits as federal workers.

The changes are outlined in a series of internal corporation memos, provided by the LSC to AP, and in an exchange of letters between corporation officials and Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa), Sen. Michael Enzi (R-Wyo.) and Rep. Chris Cannon (R-Utah).

"It looks like the Legal Services Corporation learned its lesson," Grassley said in a statement. "I hope \$14 cookies and limo rides around town are a thing of the past."

Board chairman Frank

Strickland, an Atlanta attorney, said in a letter to the lawmakers that the corporation board and top management have embraced the changes.

LSC's chief administrative officer Charles Jeffress wrote in one memo, "During board meetings, only beverages will be provided ... no food will be provided for snack breaks."

"Reasonably priced restaurants will be selected for board dinners," and guests of board members will be expected to pay, he explained.

Corporation inspector general Kirt West, the agency's internal watchdog, reported that lunch at the January 2006 board of directors meeting in Washington cost \$70 per person, while afternoon snack breaks cost as much as \$27 per person.

In addition, board members who dined together — rather than alone — while attending meetings were allowed to double their meal allowances. That policy has been dropped.

The corporation board usually has four meetings a year, including one in Wash-

ington each January. The January 2007 meeting has been moved to the conference room in the corporation headquarters, a policy that the inspector general concluded could save thousands of dollars.

While corporation officials told the auditor that headquarters conference facilities were too small for board meetings, West said the headquarters' most spacious conference room was slightly larger than the hotel conference rooms used in the past.

Jeffress said use of limousine services will be curtailed. "It's not going to be a common occurrence," he said.

LSC President Helaine Barnett, board chair Strickland and another board member have used limousine services. Strickland used a car and driver last April to take him and Barnett to meetings on Capitol Hill with lawmakers — about a 15-minute ride from headquarters.

The chauffeured ride, which cost \$423, also took (See Poor, Page 10)

Unions: Entity hiring Whites

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) - Fewer Hispanic immigrants are being hired to replace meatpacking workers arrested at Swift & Co. plants in Grand Island, Neb., and Greeley, Colo., during last week's immigration raid, union officials said Tuesday.

Local 22 Union President Dan Hoppes said Tuesday that 40 to 50 new workers have been hired at the Grand Island plant since the raids. "The lion's share of those people were Caucasian," Hoppes said.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials arrested nearly 1,300 people, most Hispanic, at six Swift & Co. plants in the sweep. Some experts say the raids could lead to a shortage of meatpackers, higher wages, and higher prices for the beef in homes and restaurants.

Several union officials said Swift, which has denied knowingly hiring illegal workers and has not been charged, improved its wages, benefits and bonuses before the raids.

"They're trying to staff up their plants and they've been raising their wages the past few weeks," said United Food and Commercial Workers spokeswoman Jill Cashen.

"To me, it's an example that when you make the job more attractive you get a different kind of applicant."

Raids were also conducted at Swift plants in Hyrum, Utah; Marshalltown, Iowa; Worthington, Minn.; and Cactus, Texas. Cashen did not provide phone numbers for union officials in Iowa, Minnesota and Texas. The union in Utah said it did not cover the Swift workers.

A message left at Swift & Co. seeking comment was not immediately returned.

In Greeley, where Swift is headquartered, union local president Ernie Duran said about 75 new workers have been hired — including about 30 Caucasians, 15 Somali immigrants and seven Hispanic immigrants, with the rest U.S.-born Hispanics. But the raid has not dissuaded Hispanic immigrants from seeking work at the plant, he said.

Before the raids, roughly 90 percent of the Greeley plant workers were Hispanic, Duran said. It was unclear, of that 90 percent, how many were immigrants and how many were U.S.-born, as the union officials said they did not keep track of members' immigration status.

Ward 1

(Continued from Page 2)

I will hold town hall types of meetings."

Another issue other than crime is "education," said Bisch. "Everybody, including parents, must make sure kids go to school."

She added, "To succeed in life takes a group effort."

Bisch said she believes that after school sports for youth would be beneficial. "I would really like to do soccer," she said. "I was involved in PAL [Police Athletic League] for two years, and have a former police officer, Daryl Brown, who has experience not only in policing, but graffiti removal, and who would like to serve as a male role model, and will help me with my campaign."

If elected, Bisch said, "The kids, especially teenagers, will have something to do [sports] until their parents come home so they will stay out of trouble."

Laurie Bisch responded to several questions regarding interaction between Ward 1 and the adjacent Ward 5 and any concerns she has.

"PAL [Police Athletic League], in Ward 5, has been my endeavor for two years. Absolutely, I would work with Ward 5 Councilman Lawrence Weekly... both wards abut each other, and

"Everybody, including parents, must make sure kids go to school."

— Laurie Bisch
Candidate Ward 1



there is slipover," Bisch said.

As far as the Enterprise Project's grocery store issue, I'm not familiar with it. But, I'll take a look at it. And if we can improve the areas and [bring in] more jobs, then Wards 1 and 5 have mutual issues," she said.

"Certainly the crime rate and run-down areas in both wards are an issue," she stated, but emphatically said, "No, there are no conflicts of interest between the wards as to economic, development, infrastructure and safety issues. I will work with Councilman Weekly on any and all issues and help in a team effort."

Tarkanian responded to similar questions about her views on the Ward 1-Ward 5 relationship.

"Larry Weekly and I have been working together right

along and will continue to so. The two wards' proximity... poses similar problems, such as services, and most of all, shared business development and jobs. There is also the issue of crime, but Larry and I have done much together, because the wards are in such proximity, but there are no conflicts between us or the wards. As far as the grocery store is concerned Larry and I have been working together on this issue... Anything that brings development and jobs to one ward, benefits the other. It has been and continues to be a team effort between Larry Weekly, and I sharing concerns and mutual interests and will continue to be the case for the betterment of both wards."

Lois Tarkanian, wife of retired UNLV basketball coach Jerry Tarkanian, is an

educator and teacher of handicapped students for 47 years. And the former state chair of the California Board of Autism, dealing with special education problems. She holds a doctorate in her field and has numerous professional achievements. Tarkanian also served 12 years as a trustee on the Clark County School Board, from 1986 thru 1998.

"I have been sponsoring Black youth with tuition and grant money." She said, "My advocacy of Black youth just didn't start; my advocacy is not just words, but with deeds." She added, "In Ward 1, I have helped Black youth, by buying books, and supporting them to go to college."

"I'm also a speech therapist and an audiologist." She went on to say, "My visions for 2007 and beyond will be to do what I've been doing for 47 years." And that is, "supporting Black youth in education."

On crime, Tarkanian stated: "I haven't had anybody in Ward 1 come to me with issues of crime."

"We hold regular Town Hall Meetings. We have been out there, listening to the community. We did all of that. If re-elected, I will continue to serve the people of Ward 1," said Tarkanian.



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