



HUGE PUBLIC CORRUPTION SCANDAL

Excessive Legal Fees Being Paid By Our Public Utilities and Government Agencies Controlled by Large Law Firms

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By: Jack Levine

I am a former F.B.I. Agent and a trial lawyer in Phoenix, Arizona, practicing for over 50 years. During my law practice, I discovered a huge public corruption scandal involving large Arizona law firms. Two of these law firms, had respectively taken over control of Arizona's two largest public utilities, Arizona Public Service and The Salt River Project, which furnish most of Arizona's electricity and water. They did this, over the years, thru an unethical scheme of gradually placing their firm members and relatives on their clients' Governing Boards and in key Executive Offices. After they gained complete control over their clients' decisions on what legal services they required and, most importantly, how much they would be paying for such services, these law firms became both enormously profitable and politically powerful.

This relationship was easily confirmed by a review of the Annual Reports of these utilities and, by comparing the names of those on their Governing Boards and Executive Offices with the names of the listed law firm members in the annual Arizona State Bar Directory. According to a former member of the Arizona Corporation Commission, which is the body that regulates the state's public utilities, these excessive fees were frequently concealed by "burying" them in the utility's huge multi-million- dollar construction and maintenance budgets.

Also, I discovered that other large Arizona law firms, were, on a regular basis in election years, contributing large sums of money to candidates running for State, County and Municipal Offices. In return, when their candidate was elected, the law firm would receive virtually all of their government agency's outside legal business at greatly excessive fees that the officials in charge of these agencies, had little incentive to question. I discovered this fraudulent "pay to play" scheme by observing that the same large law firms were representing the same government agency in litigated court cases, year after year and, by reviewing the records of political campaign contributions maintained by the Arizona Secretary of State's Office. I have been told by other Arizona lawyers with multi-state practices, that these unethical, corrupt practices exist everywhere and that the excessive fees going to our large law firms may account for as much as 10-15% of everyone's water bills, electric bills, state, county and city taxes. These unethical and fraudulent schemes have been reported to the proper authorities, without success. The almost universal response received is: "This is the way our legal and political system has always operated, so get used to it."

I have initiated this press release because it may be the last best hope for disclosing this huge public corruption scandal, which is taking money out of our pockets for the benefit of lawyers in our large law firms. According to the Sept/Oct 2019 issue of the American Bar Association Journal, the average annual income of equity partners at the nation's large law firms in 2018, was a whopping \$1,136,000. LET'S PUT A STOP TO THIS.

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