

From the J-Vault: When Government Cuts Social Services Funding

Posted At : August 2, 2011 10:55 AM | Posted By : Seth Chalmer

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"What price will we pay for state aids to religiously sponsored institutions and agencies?" asked Philip Jacobson:

What effect are these aids likely to have on our voluntary institutions? Is there a danger here for the American Jewish community...?

...Will federation boards come to take for granted the continued availability of tax dollars, and devote funds to other purposes?... *What will happen if and when these tax dollars are no longer forthcoming?*

This week, from the J-Vault: *Community Relations Implications in the Use of Public Funds by Jewish Services* (1960)

Today, Congress attempts to cut federal spending drastically. In 1960, writing in the **Journal of Jewish Communal Service**, Jacobson warned that for religious institutions, accepting public funding for social services was a dangerous game. Most of his argument leans on a strict interpretation of the First Amendment; he worries that Jewish and other religious social service agencies will either be complicit in eroding the separation of church and state or in eroding their own sectarian missions in order not to do so. But Jacobson also worries that in accepting public funds, Jewish (and other sectarian) agencies will set themselves up for a hard fall if those funds were to be cut off.

However, "I am not an advocate of abrupt withdrawal," he writes. "[T]he patient has been addicted to heavy injections for some time and the cold turkey treatment does not seem to be warranted."

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