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Federal Lobbyists Into Everything

FEDERAL bureaucrats are using many devices to get "out to the grass roots" with their programs for nationalizing and socializing America. One of these is to engage in lobbying legislatures.

This is being done, in many cases, without a lobbyist's license and without sending a person to the statehouse. Leverage can be applied in the form of a letter or phone call from a federal official or personality to a state lawmaker.

Mrs. Gerald Ford, the President's wife, has been using this tactic to help persuade legislators to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), which the Oklahoma legislature rejected.

State welfare programs are heavily influenced by Washington "lobbyists," because federal poverty assistance plans require state rules to match federal regulations or "matching money" is held back.

Routes and specifications for major highways are set in Washington, with funds shut off when states don't conform.

The prediction that a federal land use planning law may be enacted this session of Congress has Oklahoma property owners trying to get a state law passed to soften the impact. They fear the federal law will impose excessive control of private property.

A regional official argues that the Federal Energy Administration is not trying to usurp state authority. As proof, he points to the President's proposal, which states: "The purpose of this title is to set minimum standards for certain regulatory practices and procedures governing utilities, to make all jurisdictions at

least as responsive to a changed energy environment," etc., etc.

The director of the Interdepartmental Workers' Compensation Task Force from Washington says Oklahoma is one of several states that "needs to improve right away," and he expects to talk to legislators about what they ought to do to meet federal guidelines.

"This is not lobbying," he explained. "It is just giving technical assistance."

Small businessmen, housewives and farmers might be wise to give the legislature some "technical assistance," too, as they may be involved in paying for whatever the legislature does.

It was reported that Oklahoma presently meets only six of 19 points in the federal guidelines, and the assignment of the "Task Force" is to

get Oklahoma to conform to Washington ideas. The Task Force is comprised of top level officials from the Departments of Labor, Commerce, Health, Education and Welfare, and Housing and Urban Development.

The Task Force recommendations to the Oklahoma legislature call for extending larger benefits to more workers for longer periods of time, with no exemptions from requirements to carry workmen's compensation insurance. This would include household help, hired hands on farms, and all employees of small business firms.

Possibly this enlarged program is just what is needed and wanted, but it does seem that local interests ought to provide as much input of "technical assistance" as may be handed down from Olympus in Washington.