

as the American Red Cross, the Boys and Girls Club and New Hampshire



TED GATSAS

contracted to provide essential public services.

Gatsas is absolutely

Legal Assistance. It's about time.

right to start cutting those subsidies.

There are too many nonprofit groups that do good things to fund them all with taxpayer dollars. What happens is those that have political connections or have missions with which politicians want to identify themselves receive govern

If the mayor succeeds, he will set an example for the governor and the President to follow. Not that they will, but at least city property taxpayers will have a little relief even if everybody else's taxes remain needlessly high.

Firefighters win And so do the rest of us

CONGRATULATIONS, AND kudos, to the Professional Firefighters of New Hampshire for its state Supreme Court victory over the Local Government Center last month. The win is a victory for all Granite Staters, not just the firefighters and other public employees who have wondered for so long how their money was being spent.

For eight years, the firefighters have tried to get the Local Government Center to open its financial records. The center opened some but not others. The firefighters have twice gone to court to get the center to comply with the state's Right to Know law. This time, the center argued that even

though it was a government entity, some of its records were not covered by the Right to Know law.

On Jan. 29, the Supreme Court unanimously sided with the firefighters, who had requested in this particular case that the center release all of its salary information. But the firefighters' dispute is far from over. The union is still fighting for more data to find out if the center has been misusing public funds, particularly employee pension contributions.

David Lang, head of the firefighters union, deserves a big thanks for pressing this case for so many years and seeing it through to its satisfactory conclusion.

Pious Paul Hodes' elect

LIKE THE guy who swears off demon rum after enjoying years of bachelor fun, a suddenly sober Rep. Paul Hodes has experienced an election-year conversion. He may have spent his first three years in Congress soliciting earmarks and taking credit for distributing federal money in the 2nd District, but now he's decided earmarks are corrupt and wasteful.

Nine consecutive polls have shown Hodes losing his Senate campaign to his leading Republican challenger, former Attorney General Kelly Ayotte, so Hodes is making a transparent attempt to repackage

Fergus Cullen

spending that is too often ethically tainted and fiscally irresponsible," Hodes said in a recent press release.

Converts to fiscal conservatism are always welcome, but they aren't made bishop right away. Just last year Hodes sponsored at least 75 earmarks valued at more than \$302 million, based on adding up figures for projects Hodes still takes credit for on his own Web site. In his first two years in Congress, 68 Hodes-sponsored earmarks were funded by \$73 million, according to a

bragged about the \$275 earmark that helped fund the project. "In the legislative vernacular, this is a bribe somewhere," Hodes decried, admiring his own work.

Hodes has sponsored earmarks for municipal or bridge projects in dozens of communities. One municipal official described to me the process works. "We really solicited by Hodes' office: What can we do for you?" the official said. I know nothing in particular in a department head "cop" the need for a project which Hodes then sponsored. Hodes has since inquired

Life is

IF THERE is ever a time to pick which word to do the most damage to people's thinking, and to carry out that task, my nomination would be the word "fair." It is a word around by far more people than have ever bothered to try to define it.

This mushy vagueness can be a big handicap in logic; it is a big advantage in politics. All sorts of people, with different notions about what is or is not fair, can be mobilized behind this nice-sounding word, in utter disregard of the fact that they mean very different things when they use the word.

Some years ago, for example, there was a big outcry that various mental tests used in college admissions or employment were biased and "unfair" to many individual groups. Fortunately there was one voice of sanity — U. S. Riesman, I believe — who said, "The tests are not unfair; it is unfair and the tests in the results."

If by "fair" you mean one having the same opportunity of achieving success, there has never been anywhere close to being fair, anywhere at any time. If you stop an