

3. Discussion with some external contacts and funding sources as well as former organizers with ACORN, Michael Ansara with Fair Share, and Heather Booth with the Midwest Academy to determine their reactions on the Boston question.

It is important to understand this process. It was not an effort within the staff to subvert a board decision. To the staff I have presented the board's action as it was taken. I have also presented the question as an open one, which required a final decision on plans and action based on all the resource, staff, and other considerations being evaluated. This is consistent with board policy and ACORN organizational practice. Expansion decisions have been made yet we have not been able to organize in many places yet, for one reason or another. If situations change or prevent us from carrying out the decisions, the board would be presented the information and could decide whether or not to keep the project on the expansion priority list or take it off. The discussion internally has involved the practical considerations on whether or not we could successfully build a high quality ACORN operation in Massachusetts comparable to those we have constructed in other states. So, in short, the question of implementation has been an open one in the staff evaluation in which all the evidence had to be balanced and weighed in order to report back to McDonald and the executive board, whether or not we felt the job could be done. If the conclusion based on the facts argued that we could do what was necessary in Massachusetts and consistent with all the other ACORN interests and projects, then the board would receive that report. If the conclusion based on the facts argued that we could not do the job effectively for a variety of reasons, then the board would receive that report and would act according to what it thought best in the situation.

PERSPECTIVES

Before going through the process and what information it has produced and the recommendations that I would make given the evidence collected, perhaps it would be useful if I reconstructed my professional perspective around the board action and the process of evaluating the potential of a Boston ACORN.

The question to pose would be: why was I open to the board's decision and to a staff discussion about Massachusetts?

The legitimate questions here would be the following:

1. Is Fair Share the same as ACORN?
2. Is Fair Share an ally of ACORN's?

Obviously had the answers to these questions automatically been "yes" on all counts or clear in any way, then I might have asked the board to consider my objections to their decision, and I might have argued within the staff that I was closed to a discussion concerning Massachusetts.

In my view it has seemed for some time to be inevitable that we would someday organize in Massachusetts. the board was simply ahead of me on this, as it is on other issues at times.