

Advocating the overthrow of the government of the United States by force or subversion

 devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20100215-01

February 15, 2010



Raymond Chen

It has been widely reported that South Carolina now requires “subversive groups” to register with the Secretary of State (and pay a \$5 filing fee). Curiously, the list of organizations which must register include “an organization subject to foreign control.” I wonder if this means that all consulates have to register, and that when any foreign dignitary visits South Carolina, they have to pay a \$5 filing fee. (Not to mention all foreign-owned companies like Shell Oil.) Actually, it has been pointed out that a “subversive organization” includes one which advocates, teaches, or practices the propriety of controlling the government of the United States. I guess this means all political parties are subversive organizations. (Something most of us knew already.) And apparently, in your registration, you also have to include the bylaws or minutes of meetings from the last year. I wonder whether you have to resubmit the minutes each year. I’m sure somebody could keep a government bureaucrat busy for a long time by submitting hundreds of pages of “minutes”. Anyway, this is a long and largely superfluous set-up for a different story. The mother of a colleague of mine came to visit from Canada. For some reason, the United States requires visitors to fill out a questionnaire asking them whether they are a drug dealer, whether they are a Nazi war criminal, and this question:

| Do you advocate the overthrow of the United States government by force or subversion?

The sweet old lady studied the question for a while, then circled *force*.

Bonus weirdness: On the form, it also says “Answering Yes will not necessarily exclude you from admission to the United States.”

[Raymond Chen](#)

Follow

