



Something to Believe In: Politics, Professionalism, and Cause Lawyering

Austin Sarat, Stuart A. Scheingold

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Lawyers in the United States are frequently described as “hired guns,” willing to fight for any client and advance any interest. Claiming that their own beliefs are irrelevant to their work, they view lawyering as a technical activity, not a moral or political one. But there are others, those the authors call cause lawyers, who refuse to put aside their own convictions while they do their legal work. This “deviant” strain of lawyering is as significant as it is controversial, both in the legal profession and in the world of politics. It challenges mainstream ideas of what lawyers should do and of how they should behave. Human rights lawyers, feminist lawyers, right-to-life lawyers, civil rights and civil liberties lawyers, anti-death penalty lawyers, environmental lawyers, property rights lawyers, anti-poverty lawyers—cause lawyers go by many names, serving many causes. *Something to Believe In* explores the work that cause lawyers do, the role of moral and political commitment in their practice, their relationships to the organized legal profession, and the contributions they make to democratic politics.

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