

Now, neither the President in proposing this legislation nor any of those who testify in its support have seen this act as a cure-all or even remotely adequate by itself to the task of eliminating poverty.

We urge you here to consider the adequacy of a coverage for the poor of a great part of legislation which already exists. We have had reference this morning to some of this: The Fair Labor Standards Act, for instance, which even in its revised form excludes many of the rural poor, have any studies been made to see how many of the poor we are considering are covered by this act? Or what about extending social security coverage as part of the war on poverty? Farmworkers who are excluded, for instance. What about unemployment insurance coverage? Here again seasonal farm laborers are among the groups not normally covered. What about a new look at our housing policy? It, too, must share in the goal of eradicating poverty.

Finally, let us assume that the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 is passed in its strongest form and implemented in its most effective manner. Assume also that other legislation affecting the poor is strengthened. The challenge of the war on poverty will still not have been met. Before each of us, citizens and public officials, are the challenges of the manpower revolution and the conversion of our economy from defense preparation to meeting national needs.

These issues do relate to the structure of our economy and the size and kind of labor force that is required to meet the needs of a healthy economy.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our belief that the problem of poverty in our country is solvable. This bill is an important first step. With a personal and governmental commitment on a National, State, and local level equivalent to our commitment in terms of national emergency, we can wage a successful war on poverty in this way.

(The formal statement follows:)

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BY MRS. HELEN E. BAKER, MEMBER, BOARD OF DIRECTORS,
AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE

Mr. Chairman, my name is Helen E. Baker. I am testifying on behalf of the American Friends Service Committee, as a member of its board of directors. I also speak on behalf of the Friends Committee on National Legislation. The two organizations speak for themselves and for like-minded Friends. No one organization speaks officially for the Religious Society of Friends.

We appear in support of the general purposes and principles of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. We speak on the basis of our experience.

For almost 50 years the AFSC has reached out to the poor in many parts of this land, and indeed across the world. Our work in this country has involved us with the people whom the legislation under consideration is designed to help. Our work has shown us the syndrome of poverty—inadequate education, poor jobs or no jobs, poor housing. We have seen these problems combine to create an ever more permanent "poverty class."

Out of our experience we would like to identify some factors which we feel could spell the difference between success and failure in this attempt to break the circle of poverty.

We would like to emphasize that no program will produce lasting results unless it gains the participation of the poor.

To gain the participation of the poor is easier said than done. Few programs do it now. In fact, many are now saying that the people at the bottom of the economic ladder cannot realistically be involved in shaping the programs which affect their futures. We believe they can. We will report experience which bears this out.

In stressing this, we do not minimize the need for initiatives from other sources. The act appropriately calls for wide involvement in attacking poverty. It seeks to stimulate broad community responsibility for what is a problem of