

"The prohibition in section 404(B) is unfortunately stated. I surmise that it is intended to prohibit the use of data centers for payroll accounting, for example. We would certainly concur in this. On the other hand, it is frequently the day-to-day operation of city government which bears direct relationship to the quality for neighborhoods, the attitudes of people in blighted areas toward rehabilitation, law enforcement, and other programs to arrest deterioration. To limit the operation of such centers to conceptual research would be to permit analysis of only a part of the total job."

Sincerely,

PATRICK HEALY,
Executive Director.

URBAN OBSERVATORIES, TITLE IV, H.R. 12946

This subcommittee has received considerable testimony in recent weeks on the very exciting demonstration cities program. This administration, this Congress and this subcommittee have consistently demonstrated concern for the grave problems which confront America's urban centers. You have always been willing to consider with those of us who have the responsibility of governing the cities, new and revised programs of Federal cooperation designed to deal with the massive problems of physical deterioration and blight and the resulting human stress.

Certainly every city requires every tool, every resource and every encouragement which the mind of man can conceive and the Congress can provide to reverse the decline of the vital urban centers and to rebuild communities of a quality consistent with our American dream. To this end I join with my fellow mayors who have appeared before you earlier in these hearings in support of the demonstration cities program and related legislation.

My statement here is to focus attention on another critical need. I refer to the need for a quantity of readily available information which will help us to materially improve the effectiveness of our total urban effort. I, therefore, wish to discuss title IV of H.R. 12946 which authorizes grants for urban information centers.

Congress has made available an array of tools with which a variety of responsible agencies may attack the ills of our cities. Unlike a good surgeon, however, we have too frequently been compelled to operate without an adequate diagnosis of those ills. We have of necessity had to prescribe remedies which have no history of success or failure. Too often we are totally unaware of the side effects of these elixirs. We have tolerated too readily the errors of our experimentation—the social as well as the economic costs of those errors.

This committee now has before it the most comprehensive approach to treating the sick areas of our cities ever proposed. In complete honesty, we need to ask ourselves if we possess the skill to utilize the existing and the new tools in the most effective way. With such a massive approach the results can be monuments to the vision and perceptiveness of all those involved in this great cooperative venture. It could also be an economic, social, and political disaster which could set back the revitalization of our urban centers and the improvement of urban life for millions of our citizens for generations.

I would not for a moment suggest that the present tools be withdrawn or that we hesitate in our striving to design and manufacture new ones. The problems are too great and too pressing to tolerate delay.

I do emphasize the urgent need for complementing the legal and fiscal weapons with those which will aid us in using those weapons with skill and the greatest constructive results. The essential element is a greatly increased level of availability of information regarding our urban centers; a much more sophisticated analysis of that information; and a vastly improved method of comparing successes and failures in applying the various weapons available to us.

As I have reviewed the testimony received by this subcommittee beginning with Secretary Weaver's appearance on February 28, three dramatically consistent themes thread through the testimony.

First, the ills that plague our urban areas are extremely complex and therefore the remedies which must be applied are at least as complex.

Second, each remedy we prescribe only reveals its own inadequacy and the requirement for additional methods of overcoming the problem.

Third, while each community has what appears to be similar problems, the causes and the remedies are not sufficiently the same to make the use of a common treatment acceptable.