

At my invitation as the president of the National League of Cities a meeting of the NLC executive committee in Milwaukee was held together with representatives of a number of major urban oriented universities. The purpose of the meeting in June, 1965 was to explore the desirability and possibility of establishing a network of urban observatories cooperatively sponsored by the cities and interested, qualified universities.

The response was overwhelming. There was no doubt as to the need for such a program. Those attending not only identified the points I have stated but also went well beyond. The need to involve the best talent available in our universities in continuing interdisciplinary research on urban problems and of feeding their thought-provoking analyses of newly assembled data into the policy-making circuit of local government should be obvious.

The result of the Milwaukee conference was a unanimously adopted resolution calling for support of the approach by the National League of Cities and further development of this program.

On their own initiative a number of mayors have proceeded to develop city-university planning teams as a prelude to formalizing the urban observatory concept. The interest expressed by other cities and universities is beyond all expectation.

We believe that the urban information program provided for in this bill is definitely a move in the right direction. It clearly recognizes a need. It attacks the data compilation aspect of the problem.

The bill, as drafted, contains several weaknesses which we would urge be given careful consideration by this committee.

The bill is not clear as to whether the information centers will be permitted to engage in the assembly of original data. The Secretary, in his testimony on this section notes that this title would exclude proposals which involve collecting original data. This would be indeed unfortunate. Considerable data on urban areas are available and certainly should be assembled and made more readily available. Where sufficient data are lacking, such information centers should be urged to obtain them.

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, code 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.

I also want to emphasize concern for the management of the proposed centers. I would hope that the bill would be broad enough to permit the Secretary to enter into agreements with a variety of agents. In some States or metropolitan areas the logical sponsor might be a metropolitan council of local governments, as the bill appears to contemplate, while in others it might be a university, or a State league of municipalities. We are after results, and the legislation should permit that institutional arrangement which can produce the best results. We specifically recommend that the definition of "metropolitan-area agency" in section 407(3) be amended by adding before the semicolon at the end of line 11 after the words "metropolitan area" the words "or an entire State". This would definitely enable a statewide organization composed of public officials representative of cities or counties, for example, to qualify as sponsors of urban information centers either for a specific metropolitan area or for general statewide utility or both.

I believe that the language in part (B) of section 407(3) would qualify, in restricted circumstances, an urban observatory jointly established by a city and a university, but we recommend that the language of title IV make clear that such a jointly established agency would be eligible to receive assistance as an urban information center in any event.

Finally, we recommend that the 50-percent grant limitation in section 404(a) be changed to 75 percent, at least for the first 2 years, which would then conform to the grant arrangements available under title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

It would be a weak effort, indeed, if some assurance was not built into this program for an effective interchange between the proposed information centers. There should be a coordination of input, an agreement on certain areas of common investigation, interchange of information on research and analytical methods, and measures of results. It seems criminal to me that the extensive urban transportation studies carried on pursuant to the mandate of Congress in the