

URBAN INFORMATION CENTERS

We do have several major reservations about the language used in title IV demonstrations for urban information centers.

Section 402(b) (5) properly requires coordination of information systems funded by these demonstrations with systems set up with other Federal programs—most especially urban planning assistance funds. These systems should also be closely coordinated with systems already set up and in existence by States and metropolitan areas, whether or not funded with Federal funds.

Section 403, we feel, is not sufficiently flexible to allow development of useful data banks. There is certainly need for integration of data from the several Federal programs, data from State sources, and from metropolitan jurisdictions—that is, “horizontal integration” for each level of government. But there is also a need for integrated data systems for Federal, State, and urban data—that is, “vertical integration.” The distinction between “metropolitanwide utility” and “state-wide utility” is, in our opinion, completely unrealistic and should be stricken from the bill.

Section 404(a) authorizes 50-percent Federal grants. The urban planning assistance program—section 701—which has financed work along these lines in many parts of the country makes two-third grants, and other Federal agencies—such as the Office of Economic Opportunity and Economic Development Administration—will fund even higher percentages. We would favor raising the Federal share of the demonstrations envisioned in this bill to two-thirds.

Section 404(b) would, in our opinion, have the effect of making these demonstrations useless and inoperable. As planners, we will be among the most important consumers of the data in these centers, and excluding any data “to be used primarily in the day-to-day operations of State or local governing bodies and agencies” is unsound. Planning is indeed involved in day-to-day operations and this makes it useful. Since title IV would fund only demonstrations, we favor eliminating section 404(b) from this bill. When authorizations are sought to provide assistance in operation of these information centers, prohibitions about using the funds for bookkeeping, stamps or office rent can be developed administratively. Incidentally, rental of computer time is quite expensive and this should not be considered a nonfundable expense.

EDUCATION AND MANPOWER

We wish to add one further comment to this proposed legislation. These bills would increase the coordination of programs on the metropolitan and State levels of government. We support these new trends in Federal thinking. We must add, though, that there is a grave shortage of talent and personnel on the local level to do the necessary job of coordination. We feel that it would be most unfortunate for Congress to enact legislation requiring program coordination without adding money authorization for alleviating the technical manpower shortage.

The legislation before you should, in our opinion, include authorizations for training grants, inservice education, college scholarships and grants to universities to expand their facilities for edu-