

I would recommend that such a metropolitan area liaison officer have broad powers. He could not be effective if he were simply a messenger or complaint carrier from city hall to Federal agency. He would have power to cut redtape—to knock heads together, if you please—to activate many programs that now are just dreams. Such an officer could make creative federalism work effectively, and quickly, by reinforcing it with creative localism.

If such an office is created, the mayor of the core city and his council should have a voice in determining the occupant. This could be accomplished by having the mayor and city council submit a list of five or more competent individuals to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Secretary could appoint the liaison officers from this group. Or, conversely, the Secretary could send the name of his choice to the local mayor and council for ratification.

In the war on poverty, local community action programs, to gain Washington approval, must demonstrate maximum feasible participation of the community, and the poor. In the creation of a metropolitan area liaison office, I think there should be maximum feasible participation by the core municipality.

In conclusion, I urge adoption of the Demonstration Cities Act of 1966, with the amendments already suggested by spokesmen representing the U.S. conference of mayors and the National League of Cities.

I appreciate the opportunity of presenting this statement to you. Thank you.

Mr. BARRETT. Thank you, Mayor Currigan, for your very edifying and splendid statement.

You mentioned on page 5 about the coordinator. I would like to ask you a question that I have asked several of the other mayors and other witnesses who have appeared before us.

Some people seem to feel, at least have a feeling, that the Federal coordinator which the bill would set up for each demonstration city program would be some sort of a Federal dictator or czar.

Now, of course, I don't believe this. And I think that the bill is clear that he would not have dictatorial power.

But I would like to ask you the two questions I have put to these other witnesses.

Would the people who have such fears feel better, do you think, if we renamed this Federal official as a local coordinator rather than a Federal coordinator? And, second, what do you think of the idea of making the services of the coordinator optional to participating in cities rather than mandatory now as provided in H.R. 12341?

Mr. CURRIGAN. Yes. Insofar as your first question, Mr. Chairman, I think perhaps the suggestion—I would concur with it. I do think there is what in my personal opinion is usually an incorrect and unfounded though in the minds of many that the Federal Government represents the enemy, almost, and perhaps—and again I think this is largely psychological or mental—but perhaps the nomenclature of local coordinating officer might dispel a few of those what I believe are really psychological barriers, and in most cases I am convinced they are totally unfounded.

So I personally think that suggestion would have merit, and I would certainly concur in that.