

Mr. PAGE. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am Ray Page, superintendent of public instruction, State of Illinois.

I am delighted to express our concern for the education of our most precious resource—our children—and provide information to better point the way toward realization of equal educational opportunity for all of our children.

We in Illinois are concerned with the proposed amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in the same way we are concerned with the general law.

Our concern is one that I am sure the drafters of this legislation had and perhaps still have; that is, how do you insure performance of the dilatory without thwarting the efforts of the competent?

There has been only one successful program to give the kind of administrative flexibility to accomplish this. It perceived the States presenting plans for progress. Those plans were reviewed and, if proper, were approved. We have administered the National Defense Education Act successfully by that method.

In administering the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, however, we have gone in a different direction.

The laws were written and the Commissioner required States to file assurances that they would follow the laws.

With every good intention, we, like other States, filed our assurances. We found, however, that regulations were subsequently changed and on some occasions interfered with State law. We were then faced with either negating our own assurances or our State law.

This problem was evident in the amendments of the section on the Teacher Corps. I believe it to provide on page I-6 that the Commissioner has the authority to contract with local agencies without first gaining approval at the State level.

If you can, envision in your State an analogous situation where the State agency of education would arrange a contract with a principal of one of the attendance centers and agree to pay for some of those services without talking with or obtaining the approval of the local board of education.

The board of education in this case has the responsibility for and must face the liabilities of the actions in all attendance centers but has no authority to restrict in this case the activity of them.

The amendments to the Teacher Corps section prevent circumvention of the State agency. We believe that the law must say "State agency approval" rather than only permitting consultation as pointed out in section 153(A), paragraph 3, and I support this amendment.

Change in heading for title I: "PART A—ASSISTANCE FOR EDUCATION OF CHILDREN IN AREAS HAVING CONCENTRATIONS OF CHILDREN FROM LOW-INCOME FAMILIES."

On page I-7, paragraph (B), the amendments change the heading of the act and make other substantive changes.

This change in the wording would remove the restriction that currently exists to restrict reimbursements only to local educational agencies.

I believe it is unwise to create a number of educational systems to do the same task. The majority of schools in the Nation follow the tradition of having 9 months of school. During the summer, schools are not being used to capacity.