

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION AMENDMENTS 1145

in improving and extending modern foreign language instruction in our schools and colleges over the past seven years without the categorical aid programs of the NDEA. Language instruction was in a deplorable state and provided a situation which could not continue without a real hindrance to the national interest. We have seen no evidence to support the view that the same progress would have been made had the decision been left to each of the 50 States as to which programs should be supported.

Across the board support of education has much to recommend it and while we would welcome it, there is and should be continued interest in categorical programs which recognize particular national interests and concerns.

Thank you again. Rest assured the comments made in your position paper will be discussed in developing our legislative program.

If the Office of Legislation can be of further assistance, please let us know.

Sincerely yours,

AUGUST W. STEINHILBER,
Specialist for Legislation.

DECEMBER 7, 1966.

Mr. AUGUST W. STEINHILBER,
*Specialist for Legislation, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare,
Office of Education, Washington, D.C.*

DEAR MR. STEINHILBER: Thank you for your thoughtful remarks concerning the position paper of the Committee on School Finance and Legislation of the Western New York School Study Council. "Federal Aid to Education."

Your letter of November 18, 1966 urged that "anyone considering the proper Federal role in education place no small importance on categorical aid." The position paper does recognize that under certain circumstances categorical aid may be justified. Proposal 1 on page 5 includes the following commentary:

"Categorical aid should be provided by the Federal Government only in those instances where the Federal Government determines that it is in the national interest that particular types of programs or particular activities be included in the public school programs of the nation. In such instances the Federal Government should honestly admit that it is deliberately trying to influence, if not control, the programs of the public schools of the nation in these areas. Categorical aid should not require matching funds from state and local governments."

The concern of the Committee is that with categorical aid there is a substantial amount of control. If the Federal Government is sincere in its disclaimers of control which have been included in all educational legislation to date, it should refrain from any further enactments of categorical aid laws except where it is convinced that the areas of assistance are crucial to the national interest and where it is apparent that the same ends cannot be achieved without interfering with the local decision-making process. In such cases there is no justification for a disclaimer of control, for the very purpose of such legislation is to control those areas covered by the legislation.

It may be, prior to the enactment of NDEA, as you state in your letter, that "language instruction was in a deplorable state and provided a situation which could not continue without a real hindrance to the national interest." Many would question the assertion that the state of foreign language instruction was a real hindrance to the national interest and whether the expenditure of funds for foreign language instruction was the most critical of all the needs to be met by the public schools. Your next sentence clearly indicates that the purpose of NDEA is to deliberately interfere with the local decision-making process when you state that you have "seen no evidence to support the view that the same progress would have been made had the decision been left to each of the fifty States as to which programs should have been supported."

This Committee does not deny that the Federal Government has an interest in the status of education. It only asks that the Federal Government not approach these tasks lightly; that in such instances where it finds categorical aids necessary, it not disclaim any interest in control of the public schools; and that such programs, unlike the NDEA, be financed wholly from Federal funds.

Sincerely yours,

AUSTIN D. SWANSON,
Acting Executive Secretary.