

Mr. STEIGER. Would you identify yourself for us?

Mrs. BENJAMIN. I am Mrs. Margaret Benjamin and I serve as education staff for the Citizens Committee for Children.

Mr. STEIGER. Thank you, Mrs. Benjamin.

Mrs. BENJAMIN. I would like to suggest we seek legislative redress for the failure to have comprehensive planning in New York City. This has been partly the result of the failure of relationships between the Poverty Council and the board of education.

Mr. SCHEUER. Is the Poverty Council the official organization?

Mrs. BENJAMIN. Yes, it is the community action agency. I believe that only if you gentlemen could mandate a comprehensive plan could we expect any significant change.

The board of education should be obliged to provide a statement with each program saying how it fits into a total design for the improvement of the education of disadvantaged children.

I believe this is a feasible requirement and without it we are all going to continue to flounder.

Chairman PERKINS. Mr. Dellenback, do you have questions?

Mr. DELLENBACK. I also have appreciated the testimony so far. May I ask a few questions of either Mrs. Benjamin or Mrs. Levin on the Citizens Committee itself? I am intrigued by the existence of such a committee, and I would like to know just a bit about it. I see that you have been about 100 committee members on your stationery. You have 36 members on the board of directors.

The Citizens' Committee for Children of New York is an organization of professional and lay experts in various fields of child care. By combining their skills and working wherever possible in partnership with public officials, other organizations and interested individuals, the committee seeks to initiate and strengthen services for children who can neither organize nor speak for themselves.

Who belongs to this organization? How does one become a member?

Mr. LEVIN. The committee has been in existence for over 20 years.

Mr. DELLENBACK. This does not confine its structure strictly to education?

Mrs. LEVIN. No, sir. I am chairman of the educational services section and Mrs. Benjamin is the research associate of the educational services section.

There are other sections such as mental health, children's rights, health and welfare. The committee is made up of professional and lay experts in those various areas of concern for children.

Mr. DELLENBACK. I assume you are a nonprofit corporation?

Mrs. LEVIN. We are a nonprofit corporation.

Mr. DELLENBACK. Who elects the members? Are you self-perpetuating?

Mrs. BENJAMIN. New members are nominated by a nominating committee and elected by the full membership.

Mr. DELLENBACK. The board then chooses its own members but it does not assert any public role over anyone who wants to become a member?

Mrs. BENJAMIN. Members of the board also are elected by the membership.