

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION AMENDMENTS 1629

Expand programs in rural areas under direction of a new assistant director charged with implementing all types of antipoverty programs in rural regions.

Draw together diverse work training authorities to make it possible for communities to tailor projects to local needs without the red tape of multiple applications.

Define and strengthen the coordinating authority of the Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity and the Economic Opportunity Council over all antipoverty programs.

The proposed bill requests authorizations adequate to fund many local community action programs which had to be curtailed by last year's Congressional cuts in appropriations.

The proposed \$2.06 billion bill is based on experience gained in two and a half years of antipoverty administration. Amendments and new titles are recommended that will capitalize on the hard lessons learned in this time.

The legislation specifies areas that will be strengthened, spelling them out with exact guidelines and requirements, and codifies areas where the record shows achievement and progress.

The Office of Economic Opportunity, which necessarily reached out and tried many new avenues when the War on Poverty was launched in November, 1964, has, in general, redrawn and redefined its lines of attack according to practical successes attained.

The thrust of the proposed legislation underscores the paramount purpose of the antipoverty effort—that is, making productive citizens and fully participating citizens of all who now live in poverty. Those in poverty total about 32 million men, women, and children, or approximately 10 million family units.

COMMUNITY ACTION

Community action program amendments are aimed at taking all steps possible to help the poor obtain knowledge and skills which are needed to become self-sufficient.

The present provision that one-third of the governing boards of community action agencies must be representatives of the poor is retained. Added are requirements that community action agencies—the locally organized and locally administered antipoverty units—provide an important role for public officials, as well as for representatives of business, labor and other private community leadership groups.

The amendments would expand the means of state participation in community action programs, giving a wider role to state technical assistance agencies and providing that state agencies operate or serve as a conduit of funds for specific programs.

Local governing boards of community action agencies will be required to have effective control over all basic programs, planning, budget and personnel policies. Minimum functions are prescribed for CAAs, and requirements are added for annual operating audits, and administrative and personnel standards are tightened.

There is a provision for appointing committees of local business and professional men to advise the local community agencies. Standards are set for evaluating the effectiveness of the CAA operation.

Methods are described to cut red tape and eliminate duplication where several federal and state agencies are involved in a single project.

WORK AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

Work and Training Program amendments include a new employment program to reach thousands of unemployed or underemployed slum residents. For the first time, it will provide these people—many of them now only marginally employable at best—with intensive assistance needed to get and hold the jobs which exist in urban areas.

The amendment further create a new manpower package which includes Neighborhood Youth Corps and Kennedy-Javits authorities, plus a consolidated Nelson-Schneider program. They make it possible for communities to deal with one single Federal agency in developing projects that pull together the resources of several Federal programs.

These programs, carried out with assistance from other Federal agencies, would be coordinated by the community action agencies.