

The President said his goal was "in every ghetto of America a neighborhood center to service the people who live in that area" and he asked us "to increase the number of neighborhood legal centers to make a major effort to help every tenant secure his rights to safe and sanitary housing if he lives in the United States of America."

Another important development is to be seen in the current Congressional consideration of our legislation. The Senate subcommittee handling our program has adopted an amendment authorizing OEO to expend \$100 million for health centers like those already established in Denver, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Mississippi and elsewhere. The subcommittee also indicated that Head Start might receive \$200 million more than has been requested. A similar or larger amount may also be added for employment programs. At the same time, there is a determination by some members of Congress seriously to curtail the level of "unearmarked" community action funds for local discretion.

As these national emphasis programs grow in size and diversity, they must not lose their inherent purposes as *Community Action* programs. Our insistence on participation of "the residents of the areas" has not been limited to, and will not be limited to, membership on CAP governing boards. That particular "bone of contention" is for the most part now behind us. I tried to explain the need for this greater concept of participation during my recent appearance at the Ribicoff hearings. I quoted the man from Watts who told me:

"Sargent Shriver, you listen and listen good. I'll tell you exactly how it is. We want to run the jobs. We want to run the programs. It is our lives. It is our future."

We have no intention, of course, of letting any one group, even the poor themselves, "run the jobs" or "run the programs." That's not *Community* action. But it is crucial that all of us understand the intensity of poor people's determination to participate actively in programs designed specifically to help them help themselves.

Our refusal to be bound by strict formulas or uniform applications of the principle of "maximum feasible participation" must not be interpreted as softness on the principle itself. While we accept flexibility in the implementation of such participation, we are inflexible in our determination to achieve it as fully and as rapidly as possible.

Involvement and active participation by the poor do not, it must be understood, rule out important roles for the other parts of the community. The very concept of community action means that the *whole* community is involved—public officials, private agencies, professional societies, industry, labor, church, and others. The poverty program will succeed only as all of these sectors of community life make their appropriate contributions.

The new element in community affairs—involvement of the poor themselves—has not always been understood, and is still being resisted. This is the reason for this memorandum. I will not consider any program a true community action program which does not have maximum feasible participation by *all* segments of the community—and that *must* include the intended beneficiaries of that program.

The Office of Economic Opportunity funds, delegates, administers or coordinates a vast array of programs. Every one of those programs can be perverted into a form of dole—paternalistic, unilateral, and degrading. It has become clearer than ever in the past months that the poverty program must stake its existence on that same ideal upon which our nation gambled from the outset: Democracy.

Community action is a democratic antidote to the dole—an antidote which offers an opportunity for a voice for each and a role for all. From the outset, the poverty program has been embroiled in countless endeavors to give life and meaning to the words "maximum feasible participation." Such was our mandate, written and enacted by Congress, signed by the President of the United States, hallowed by historical precedent, and now reconfirmed by pragmatic experience.

Now we enter into a new phase—one which can leave the form but bleed the substance from those achievements.

First, national priority programs—Head Start, Upward Bound, Legal Services—tend to focus attention on the delivery of a certain kind of service, and the contribution it can make. Those programs are not exempt from the statutory mandate of maximum feasible participation. Those programs must not become