

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1967 1031

Similar activities were observed on the general election day, May 13, 1967. It should be noted at this point that the lists which were used at some of the polling places to check off the names of those who had voted were printed by some type of electronic machine.

The election day activities observed are described as follows: at all precincts that are predominantly negro or racially mixed, people were stationed with "check-off" voter lists. Drivers would bring voters to the polling places in vehicles displaying signs reading "Vote today—use this car." The voters would leave the cars and confer with the people who had the "check-off" list. The voters would then enter the polling places. After voting, they would be driven away in the same cars. These cars were observed following the same procedure throughout the day. Printed lists of recommended candidates were seen in the vehicles and also were seen in the hands of voters as they entered the polling places. Some of the drivers of the described cars were identified as staff members of Operation Breakthrough. Others were identified as students at nearby universities. Some of the students stated that they were driving at the request of Operation Breakthrough staff members. The activities described above involved only negro voters.

It is my opinion that these activities are outside the realm of programs envisioned by members of Congress when they passed the Equal Opportunity Act of 1964. I believe that this fact is borne out by the action taken by Congress in amending this act in 1966 after there was an indication of political activities in OEO-sponsored agencies. I further believe that no public funds should be furnished to any organization that is politically involved or whose employees are actively involved in politics.

It is the expressed opinion of many local business and civic leaders that Operation Breakthrough has become ineffective, largely because of political involvement in this and in past elections in Durham County. I therefore respectfully request that the Education and Labor Committee follow whatever course of action deemed necessary in order to assure the people of Durham that any Federal funds allotted to Durham will be handled only through organizations whose staff members are totally dedicated to helping our poor, and that under no circumstances will any tax money be spent that in any way could build or aid in the building of a political machine.

Very truly yours,

G. FRED STEELE, JR.

On June 2, 1967, Mr. A. C. Sorrell, 323 Foster Street, Durham, North Carolina, a member of the Board of Directors, Operation Breakthrough, advised he has been concerned over the political involvement of Operation Breakthrough employees during the past six months. He stated his concern is shared by numerous businessmen and community leaders in Durham.

Mr. Sorrell complained to the Executive Director of Operation Breakthrough in a letter dated May 15, 1967. A copy of this letter and replies from Operation Breakthrough, dated May 17 and May 19, 1967, follow:

MAY 15, 1967.

Mr. WILLIAM R. PURSELL,  
Director—Operation Breakthrough,  
Durham, N.C.

DEAR BILL: I would like to restate my displeasure with the political activities of Operation Breakthrough. As a member of your Board, I am requesting that a written report be furnished me as to the activity of all personnel in the election Saturday. I am referring to their time, both on and off the job.

Please give this matter your prompt attention.

Very truly yours,

A. C. SORRELL, Vice President.

DURHAM, N.C., May 17, 1967.

Mr. A. C. SORRELL,  
Clark & Sorrell, Inc.,  
Durham, N.C.

DEAR Mr. SORRELL: This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of May 15, 1967, in which you requested information regarding the activities of our staff members on May 13, 1967.

I have given this request serious consideration and have decided that, because the information requested regards personnel matters, and because of my respon-