

As I indicated in a recent House speech in support of the debt ceiling increase, those of us Members of Congress representing urban areas with high levels of need cannot countenance any further dilution of the vital programs currently being carried on through the Office of Economic Opportunity.

While each Member of Congress serves a varied community with distinct and different needs, it is inconceivable to me that the House of Representatives should overlook the national problem of poverty.

It is no longer feasible or rational to demand the disbanding and destruction of an important agency which serves to coordinate and to assist on a unifying basis those thousands in my district and millions throughout the country submerged in the mire of poverty and despair.

This program of economic opportunity has already demonstrated through employment and community participation in health programming, and in neighborhood renewal and rehabilitation, that the worth of this effort is vital and must be continued.

I do not dismiss lightly, Mr. Chairman, the mistakes which I know have occurred. I would only ask a degree of understanding which must flow from the enormity of this program. The magnitude of such an effort does not come prepackaged and fully guaranteed with a double-our-money return if not satisfied.

This program has been truthfully packaged. It has not been misrepresented in any way, and it has, in my judgment, surpassed the hopes of many of us in beginning this immense task of helping the poor help themselves.

But, Mr. Chairman, this is obviously only a beginning and a small one when compared to the size of the problem of poverty which confronts our country.

I would specifically wish to endorse two proposals which are new to the OEO effort.

One relates to the availability of neighborhood-youth-corps-type funding for on-the-job training for out-of-school youth in private industry, section 102, known as "Work and Training for Youth and Adults."

It has been my feeling over the existence of this program that private employers must be brought more closely in touch with the national effort to develop employability among our inner city and rural disadvantaged youth.

I would like to point out at this point, Mr. Chairman, that we have had a parallel experience as the one experienced in Washington in the summer jobs program. In Washington the papers have carried full and complete stories.

In my community the Federal Government, through its participation, has been involved in the creation of 6,000 opportunities. The private sector came up with 250, and I think they were stretching in the calculation.

This indicates the great problem we have in the private sector. There were some 15,000 to 20,000 summer jobs created, but they followed the pattern of nepotism.