

terests in a concentrated effort that necessarily involves all of them, so, too, does the Office of Economic Opportunity.

In my estimation, OEO, the machinery that Congress created to administer the war on poverty, was well conceived, and should not be dismantled, as some have suggested, merely because it has shown some imperfections.

Our nearly 3 years' experience with OEO are reflected in the streamlining and strengthening provisions of the bill before you.

It is my firm belief that a majority of the flaws that have shown up in the administration of certain aspects of the war on poverty—most notably the community action programs—are not inherent in the structure of OEO but rather are a reflection of the fact that some American cities were not as well prepared for the demands of the war on poverty as was Pittsburgh.

Our Pittsburgh program shows that by combining the resources and talents available in any American community the war on poverty can be won. But it is essential to have at the Federal level one independent agency, OEO, capable of concentrating skills and resources in the manner the local programs do.

Mr. Chairman, I have noticed that many of those who are quick to denounce the War on Poverty are equally quick to defend its specific component programs, such as Project Headstart and the Neighborhood Youth Corps. These people seem to feel that by removing the specific programs from the jurisdiction of OEO criticism of the antipoverty program will end.

To me, this is specious logic.

First, we have seen over the years how difficult it is to assure interdepartmental cooperation on any project, and there is little reason to believe that this situation would improve if the various antipoverty programs were parceled out among the various departments.

Furthermore, the basic concept of the war on poverty—a total, concentrated attack on the complex of social, physical, and economic ills that afflict our poor—would be subverted by fragmenting programs that OEO has thus far carefully coordinated among departments already overburdened by the demands of their own programs.

Third, abandonment of OEO as proposed in the opportunity crusade would forfeit nearly 3 years of experience and know-how accumulated by that agency in the administration of the war on poverty. In many respects, the war would have to begin again from where it started in 1964.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I urge the Committee to retain the Office of Economic Opportunity and to strengthen and streamline its operations by adopting the amendments in the bill now before you.

Thank you for allowing me to appear here today.

Chairman PERKINS. Do you feel we would be defeating our efforts to do something for the people with the greatest need throughout America if we abolished the Office of Economic Opportunity or transferred it to another department of the Government?

Mr. MOORHEAD. I do. I believe you need a united effort at the local level and a united effort at the Federal level.

Chairman PERKINS. Do you feel we would have lost the experience gained in trying to serve the poor people of the Nation if we did that?

Mr. MOOREHEAD. I am convinced we would do so.