

education and retraining when needed at any point in an individual's working career; apprenticeship and on-the-job training programs; day-care centers for disadvantaged preschool children to give parents the opportunity for employment; compensatory programs for disadvantaged children beginning at the preschool level and extending through secondary education; and Federal financial help to aid needy students remain in high school and to take advantage of post-high-school training and education.

I know that many of our leagues have already written to you describing specific poverty programs in their communities.

Today I should like briefly to present to you an overall picture of the national league's assessment of the poverty program based on reports in various forms which have come to us from our more than 1,200 local leagues. (We are also attaching to our statement a number of league comments.)

At the outset I should like to stress that the League of Women Voters of the United States strongly supports the efforts which have been undertaken by the Federal Government following passage of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.

We believe that progress is very definitely being made. It also seems very clear to us that we have a long way to go before we can begin to feel that we are getting the upper hand over the root causes which continue to generate poverty.

The job the country is trying to do—to remove inequalities and actually to create the conditions under which equality of opportunity will be a reality for all persons—not only is going to take a great deal of time, but also it is going to require more, not less, commitment of ideas, energy, and funds.

Of the programs established by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, Community Action has attracted the greatest interest within the League of Women Voters. Our members support its basic goals of encouraging local initiative and innovation.

By requiring participation of the poor, it has enabled many people for the first time to work to solve their own problems and to plan their own lives. It gives them an important part in defining their own needs, in suggesting priorities and in devising ways to meet them. By offering people who have never before had the opportunity a chance to develop leadership, Community Action has added a vital and fundamentally constructive new element to the local political scene.

We have received many reports from our local leagues about the Community Action program as it has been implemented across the country.

There has been a variety of successes and problems. Many of the Community Action programs were started relatively smoothly; some were not.

There have been—and there undoubtedly will be—conflicts with established agencies and with local government in some communities.

We expect that problems of implementation and coordination will continue. We know more time is needed for local Community Action Agency councils or boards to analyze and agree upon priorities and upon ways in which to meet them.

People who have not worked together before as members of a group need to learn how, and the poor and the nonpoor must learn