

to communicate and to work with one another in a framework of mutual respect.

We cannot emphasize too strongly the need for enough time to allow Community Action programs to develop and to work out solutions to the many problems involved in organizing.

The most serious problem our local leagues have described, however, does not concern administration. Many of our leagues have reported difficulties and bitter disappointments as a result of the drying up of versatile funds, resulting from the stringent earmarking of the 1966 amendments.

While the league supports national emphasis programs, such as Headstart, which receive earmarked funds, it is extremely important that there be enough available unrestricted money for locally developed programs and experimentation.

Another widespread problem is difficulty with redtape, overly complicated administrative procedures, and long delays in funding.

We recognize, of course, the need for proper oversight of the expenditure of funds, but we hope that the Office of Economic Opportunity—with the help of the Congress—will continue to push for simplified and consistent guidelines and procedures for applications.

Paralleling our interest in local community action umbrella agencies is our interest in the administration of the poverty program at the Federal level. We think it is necessary to have a single Federal agency to focus on the needs of the poor and to be responsible for the difficult and indispensable job of originating, coordinating, and evaluating programs to meet those needs.

The league therefore strongly supports the continuation of the Office of Economic Opportunity.

We think that the Office of Economic Opportunity has, by and large, performed its job well—particularly as the innovator of programs aimed at finding solutions to a multifaceted, extremely complicated problem.

We do recognize that coordination of the various poverty programs run by different Government agencies is difficult and has not always been smooth. Simultaneously, we think that there is little reason to see why disbanding the Office of Economic Opportunity or “spinning off” major programs would improve the relationships between, for example, Health, Education, and Welfare and the Departments of Labor, Agriculture, and Housing and Urban Development.

In fact, we believe that, if anything, the coordinating role of the OEO should be buttressed in order to better insure that poverty programs administered by other agencies—including delegated Economic Opportunity Act programs—actually are directed to the needs of the poor.

I do not mean to imply that league members believe current OEO administration or programs are perfect, but it seems to us that now is the time for continued and sophisticated evaluation of results and for adaptations based on those evaluations rather than drastic changes and cuts.

Our comments about the Economic Opportunity Amendments of 1967 can be relatively brief. Basically, it seems to us the amendments make no major changes in the present program. We understand that the \$2.06 billion requested by the administration would allow for a