

modest increase in all programs. We think \$2.06 billion is the absolute minimum and we would be far happier with a larger sum, considering the magnitude of the need.

We do note with approval that the bill would not earmark title II funds. Our experience has been that earmarking funds for certain programs limits the freedom of local initiative, limits the flexibility of the OEO, and inhibits and frustrates innovation at the local and Federal levels.

In the interest of flexibility we also question the wisdom of writing out in the law many detailed regulations which are already administratively in operation.

Those on the Job Corps, for instance, seem to us rather rigid—especially in view of the fact we have heard only favorable reports on the Job Corps from leagues near Job Corps centers.

Finally, the league supports the amendments to the present act which provide more specific provisions for evaluation both by the OEO itself and outside professionals. The league also supports increased funds for research and pilot demonstration projects.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, none of us knows as yet if the poverty program will, in fact, be successful in removing the root causes of poverty. That task will certainly involve a joint effort by many agencies, all levels of government, and the private as well as public sector of American society.

It is clear, however, that some progress is being made. The League of Women Voters believes we should continue to maintain, and indeed, increase, the momentum of this country's effort to provide equality of opportunity for all its people.

Mr. HAWKINS. Thank you, Mrs. Benson, for a very excellent statement. I notice you do have other members of the league present. Would you like to introduce them?

Mrs. BENSON. There are quite a few here. Perhaps we should go on.

Mr. HAWKINS. Mr. Meeds, do you have any questions?

Mr. MEEDS. Thank you.

First let me compliment you on your testimony personally and also compliment the organization which you represent.

I am particularly interested in your observation that you gather from comments of your local leagues that the effort with which we are involved here is to a great degree experimental.

Frankly, I am very pleased to see that you are taking the position that this is a social experiment, because I fear that some of us have felt from the outset that it might be an overnight cureall for problems and feel it is a solution rather than an experiment.

I think this is the first step that has to be taken in corrective evaluation of the program.

It seems to me of particular value in your statement is the fact that you support a continuation of the heading up of these many programs, experimental programs, by the OEO.

Does this come about from or is this expressed by the letters which you receive from your groups and by research which has been done by your local chapters of the League of Women Voters?

Mrs. BENSON. Yes; it does. It has come to us in many forms—letters, reports. We have an annual time of the year when annual reports come in and many of their comments were included on these.