

implemented in the community, talks with the people who are involved with the program and running the program such as the director and also with the people for whom the program is intended to see that they are really doing what they were intended to do.

Mr. MEEDS. Additionally, as a Member of Congress, I and four other members of the Washington State delegation attended and participated in about a 3-hour session of intense questioning by league members in six different groups about programs—not only the OEO but other programs with which we were engaged here in Congress.

Mrs. BENSON. I know the meeting to which you are referring. I read about it in the Washington Voter. This would have been part of their effort to bring to the attention of the public these various programs and also to learn more about them themselves.

Mr. MEEDS. When you talk about a study and an evaluation you are really talking about a lot of effort that has gone into this by people at the local level and the conclusions you give the committee today are the consensus of those studies and evaluations made; is that correct?

Mrs. BENSON. That is correct. I should perhaps say so there will be no question about it, we don't claim unanimity in the League of Women Voters.

We have overwhelming majority.

Mr. MEEDS. I would just comment it is a woman's prerogative to retain the right to dissent.

I am also interested in your observations about the earmarking and categorizing which was done by the amendments of 1966 and the effect on local community action programs.

You might expand a little bit on the conclusions you have in your prepared testimony with regard to the results that your people obtained.

Mrs. BENSON. The effect of the earmarking would not make any difference if there were no ceilings on how much money is appropriated. It would not make any difference if you earmarked a couple of million dollars if there were money left over for the additional programs the local agencies might decide to set up.

Since there is a large ceiling and not very much overall available for title II, if the money is ahead of time earmarked it cuts down the flexibility at each local level to institute programs other than those earmarked programs such as Headstart.

We submitted with our testimony a number of samples of recent comments from local leagues and a number of them in this sampling refer to the problem of getting started, going through a great deal of planning, getting people together to come to a meeting when they have never been to a meeting before and get them to sit down and talk to people and talk about what they mean and finally manage as these examples show an agonizing period of time to determine what is needed.

Then they apply for funds and then there are no funds available because of earmarking and the ceilings on the appropriations.

We recognize there has to be a ceiling on appropriations but we would rather see this flexibility with the local communities and the local community action groups should have greater flexibility in deciding what should be spent.