

They should be able to decide what kinds of programs they need. In some communities it may be a Headstart program or in others a combination of centers, day care, health centers, whatever it might happen to be.

Mr. MEEDS. Don't you think they will make errors?

Mrs. BENSON. Undoubtedly there will be errors but the whole history of programs we have instituted at all levels of Government in this country—local and national—errors are always going to be made.

You have to learn from your errors and go on and not make the same errors again hopefully.

Mr. MEEDS. Thank you, Mrs. Benson.

Mr. HAWKINS. Mr. Steiger?

Mr. STEIGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mrs. Benson, it is a pleasure to have you here before the committee representing the league. I was very much interested in your comments and do appreciate the processes by which the league arrives at its consensus and therefore does appear before the committee.

There are portions of that consensus with which I might not agree.

There are, however, portions of it with which I do agree. I notice that you do raise the point which has been of concern to many of us on page 3 of your testimony about the difficulty with redtape, overly complicated administrative procedures, and long delays in funding.

I could not help but notice the statement from the Champaign County, Ill., League of Women Voters in which they said:

Another real stumbling block is the utter chaos in our Chicago Regional Office. Personnel turnover is high, agreements made with one administrator may be annulled by his successor; decisions seem often arbitrary and irrational.

Since Wisconsin is serviced by the Chicago regional office, I fully appreciate how the Champaign County, Ill., chapter of the League of Women Voters feel.

Mrs. BENSON. I should say since this report came in we understand there has been a change in the staff in the Director of the Chicago regional office. We had a report not too long ago from another community which is serviced by that office and things seem to be on the upswing rather than the other way around.

Mr. STEIGER. As far as I know, it has greatly improved and I think we can all be grateful for that. It is a very serious problem and it is one to which the Congress must give attention.

I also agree and was very interested in your very pertinent remarks regarding versatility. This is something which I know is looked upon with great concern by many because it does as you have so ably stated, limit the flexibility of the local community to determine its own priorities.

While it may be that the Congress can assume there are certain priorities throughout the country, it is much more difficult for us to do so than it is for a local community action agency to do so and I think your statement adds a great deal to the cause of those of us who want to continue the versatility and not go to either the kind of earmarking that we have had in the past or as some have suggested, we ought to have in the future.

On page 5 of the testimony you have given you make reference to the evaluation by OEO and also support increased funds for research and pilot demonstration projects.