

2662 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1967

The result has been the complete lack of programs in some areas of poverty, while other areas have multiple services available. No single agency at the state or local level has jurisdiction over funding, and even within O.E.O. some programs are required to have the approval of an Atlanta regional office, while others are funded directly from Washington.

Most of the problems which have come to light in the various programs result from this lack of coordination and control.

The Federal-aid-to-hospitals program is an example of administrative procedure which might have been followed. The Federal funds are apportioned among the states and a state government office receives requests for funds and allocates them to the various hospitals on the basis of need and priority. There is no similar plan in operation for the "War on poverty"—any group, anywhere, can apply for funds. No state or local governmental agency reviews the need in relation to the needs of the state as a whole.

Private groups, such as the Community Action Fund and American Friends Service Committee, have received Federal grants under these programs and have caused difficulty. They have not been responsive or representative of the areas or people to be served. Cooperation with local government was in many cases nonexistent. While many operated with good intent and had the services of dedicated employees, they failed to establish the necessary community cooperation which is required of successful programs.

These two programs in particular require special critical review. On the basis of complaints received and personal investigation, it appeared necessary to secure an outside professional audit of activities of the Community Action Fund, Inc. and the American Friends Service Committee. At my request, the United States General Accounting Office conducted that investigation, and their report has now been made public.

The use of Federal tax funds for political or union activity is objectionable to all citizens. But the shortsighted use of time, energy and money for these purposes also deprives the poor of these resources for legitimate efforts to help them better their own living conditions. The taxpayer is not the only loser, then, but the poor themselves suffer perhaps the greater loss, since these funds were supposedly being provided to assist them in solving the very real and serious problems they must face in life. Unions have the facilities, manpower and funds to do this organizing job.

The General Accounting Office specifically notes the involvement of the Community Action Fund, Inc. and the American Friends Service Committee in a number of union organizing activities. The report speaks for itself, but it must be noted here that all this activity took place while supervision was supposedly being furnished by the Office of Economic Opportunity, and in spite of the fact that the situation was called to the attention of O.E.O. on several occasions, only to be denied.

The Congress must require more professional management from Federal government agencies, and copies of these reports are being furnished members of the appropriate Congressional Committees.

O.E.O. should proceed immediately, as requested by the General Accounting Office, to identify funds misspent by the Community Action Fund, Inc., and the American Friends Service Committee, on union organizing activities indicated in the G.A.O. report. O.E.O. should immediately review their own audit procedures to insure that similar mis-use of funds cannot occur in the future, and that grant recipients are most fully aware of the limitations of their use of Federal funds.

Existing channels of communication and cooperation between Federal, state and local governments should be further developed to meet the special needs of the poor, and especially the migrant farm worker and his family.

At present, migrant programs are administered directly from Washington. The state and local governments should become more involved in these programs, have more responsibility for them and supervision over them.

Housing, education and health are three areas where concrete results can be achieved through increased effort without the necessity of a bureaucracy of overlapping and disorganized and uncoordinated public and private agencies. All these areas are within the scope of existing public agencies, which could more properly administer special migrant problems.

In education, lines of communication already exist between county school systems and the state education department, and in turn between the state and the U.S. Office of Education. The Florida State Department of Education should