

stimulating and assisting the national effort to provide all citizens with the opportunities necessary for them to realize their full human and economic potential through education, job training, neighborhood organization, agricultural and business development, and programs of special social services.

NACD also aims to:

(a) Promote professional competence and growth in the administration of state and local community development projects;

(b) Stimulate interest and research in the development of human resources among charitable and educational institutions in the community and among the widest possible segment of the American population;

(c) Enhance the relationships among National, State and local agencies whose purposes are to promote and assist the development of human resources.

We do not appear here today in support of any bill now before the Congress amending or repealing the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 that is now before the Congress.

We do appear to ask you to provide the local communities of the Nation with the necessary tools for them to effectively combat poverty.

Our organization recently held seven regional meetings across the country attended by over 1,000 representatives of local communities who are active in community action work.

One of the results of these meetings is a broad consensus on the legislation needed to more effectively implement antipoverty programs at the local level.

We are pleased to note that there seems to be a general consensus in Congress and in our Nation that the war on poverty must be continued.

Our organization and our members maintain very strongly that the war on poverty must and will be won at the community level.

One of the major points of disagreement seems to be the issue of whether the Office of Economic Opportunity should be continued and strengthened or whether antipoverty programs should be conducted through the diffused efforts of a number of agencies with no strong coordination at the Federal level.

We strongly urge the continuation of the Office of Economic Opportunity as the agency to effectively conduct the Federal programs to eliminate poverty. To date we don't feel that anyone has provided convincing evidence that any other agency or combination of agencies could successfully assume the responsibilities and duties of OEO.

Just as we need OEO at the Federal level we also need an agency at the local community level to plan, coordinate, and implement programs. The Community Action Agency fills this role.

The Community Action Agency has many unique attributes and one of them is the involvement of program participants in the development and operation of programs. We believe this involvement to be a necessary ingredient in helping our disadvantaged citizens to solve their own problems. Another strength of the Community Action Agency is its capacity to involve and mobilize all of the resources of our communities. We believe that the poor working in unison with the total community, including all of the public and private elements, is the ideal system for action at the local level.