

2678 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1967

Mr. DAY. My address, business address, is 1005 East Main Street, Medford, Oreg. I am going to lay aside some of my prepared statement because I think some of the—some of it has been said.

Chairman PERKINS. Without objection your prepared statement will be inserted in the record.

(The statement referred to follows:)

STATEMENT OF MR. BEN DAY, LAWYER, MEDFORD, OREG.

Mr. Chairman, members of the House Education and Labor Committee, my name is Ben Day, I practice law in Medford, Oregon, my business address is Day and Courtright, 1005 East Main Street, Medford, Oregon.

Because of what I will say and attitudes which I will express, I think it will be helpful if I first tell you something of myself and my background. I am a Republican, I spent three sessions in the Oregon Legislature as a Representative and a Senator, undoubtedly I was on the conservative side of the line. My background is agriculture, which was my full time occupation for many years. What understanding I had with poverty came from contact with people who worked for me on the ranch and who were a bit poorer than I was, and from the general concepts gained through newspapers and talk around the Legislature. In any event, I was quite satisfied with my knowledge and understanding of poverty. In the summer of 1965 I became involved in our Jackson County citizen's efforts to participate in the War on Poverty. My first reaction was a feeling of insult to my community, because I really didn't think that we had a poverty problem. This was followed by curiosity and then by realization of the extent of our poverty problem.

For more than a year now I have been Chairman of the Jackson County Community Action Council. For the past two years I have worked a great deal on local poverty problems and with local low-income people. From working with these people and watching the successes or failures of various efforts, I have almost completely revised all of my earlier ideas.

I had to revise them, because the true realities were entirely different than I had always thought.

The problems which this committee faces cannot be properly answered without a much better understanding of the problem than that which has been prevalent in this country in the past. Last Thursday I spent two hours at the meeting of our Study and Review Committee. This Committee is composed entirely of low-income people. Each low-income member of our board is a member. At this meeting, there were also some of our aides, probably about twenty people in all. I asked them to give me their ideas of our programs so that I could present them to you. Here are some of the results:

1. We should be funded for longer periods of time. It is inefficient and wasteful for us to dash into a program for a short period.
2. The established state and federal agencies have not been able to reach people. We do. We reach their minds and gain their cooperation.
3. The local CAP Agency should have more authority.
4. There should be more flexibility within OEO guidelines in order to fit local conditions and needs.
5. Congress and the public are expecting results too quickly. Give us enough time to do a job. Sometimes it would be better not to start, than to start and not finish. It is too disappointing to have it stopped before good results are achieved as promised.
6. People fear that what has been started will revert to established agencies.
7. People say this is the first time they have been asked what their own thoughts and wishes are.
8. We make people want to get off Welfare and to improve their position.
9. We are making the community, as a whole, aware of low-income problems.
10. If only some of these changes are accomplished within my life time, I will feel that my work has been worthwhile.
11. We build peoples confidence in themselves. This is through education, GED, job training and providing opportunities.
12. Women who aren't trained or educated can't pay a baby-sitter and make ends meet, so they give up.
13. Despite our present high unemployment rate of eight per cent we have a shortage of skilled and semi-skilled workers, such as welders and so on. We should make job training available locally.