

2834 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1967

I think it would be a very serious mistake for the Technical Assistance Office at the state level to have any less power and authority than it does at the present time.

As the Governor of a rural, urban state, I would point out that there should be variety in the OEO program. We have a great number of low-income people living in small towns in Kansas who could possibly use the services of OEO. I am encouraged to note that the national policy seems to be shifting to provide additional services to rural areas. I see the need for the Technical Assistance Office working with small communities in our State providing assistance to them in the areas of housing and employment. In these smaller communities, there is not the expertise to develop programs. If programs presently available from the federal government are to have wide usage, then it seems to us that the Technical Assistance Office can be an important arm in getting this information out to the communities.

I think also that the Technical Assistance Office can serve as the back-up arm for these local communities and aid them as they draft proposals before forwarding them to the Regional Office or to federal offices. Here, I am thinking not only of proposals related to OEO but proposals which are related to other federal agencies.

In our State, as well as many other states, I am sure there is an increasing awareness of the need for social planning comparable to the physical planning that has taken place over many years. I think that OEO and the Technical Assistance Office, specifically, can make a real contribution. Their philosophy of coordination and cooperation, as well as trying to move with some dispatch to get things done, would lend itself to the development of a social planning concept for the state.

One of my great concerns relative to this legislation is the whole question of bookkeeping relative to the local programs. Dr. Harder, from our Technical Assistance Office, has indicated that the matter of internal control and the auditing of reports in a recurring problem with several of the community action agencies. I hope that the legislation might underline the real importance and necessity for the development of a comprehensive auditing system at every level. Even though we are dealing with a great number of people who may feel that government has slighted them in the past, it does not seem to us that this opens the door to the spending of public monies without a careful check on how these monies are being expended. I would like to see some system developed whereby the Regional Office, working in concert with the State Technical Assistance Office, would be in a position to make a three-month check after the beginning of every OEO project.

I think that there has been a number of good things developing out of the OEO program; however, I am concerned about the negative publicity that develops from time to time. I hope that as this legislation is considered and passed by the House and by the Senate, that there would be a clear mandate to all OEO affiliated persons to be judicious in the manner in which these programs are operated.

With every good wish.

Yours sincerely,

ROBERT DOCKING,
Governor of Kansas.

STATE OF KANSAS,
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR,
Topeka, July 20, 1967.

HON. CARL D. PERKINS,
Chairman, House Committee on Education and Labor,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN PERKINS: Since my earlier letter to you concerning the Office of Economic Opportunity, we have become more involved in budget preparation. I am underlining some of the remarks in the July 7th letter.

In my administration, the State Technical Assistance Coordinator serves as my personal representative to the State Board of Health and to the State Board of Social Welfare. In this capacity he is present for the early development of budgets. At this point, he is able to remind the Boards that their responsibility is to all the people of the State of Kansas, including the poor. Also, he is able to get information back to me so that I am aware of the thinking of these two important Boards. Through the Coordinator, the Boards are in a position to know the general thinking of this administration.