anti-poverty structures, to devise and submit their own plans for attacking the causes of poverty.

The role of the Office of Economic Opportunity is that of the maintenance of certain minimal standards and the provision of funds for community action projects which meet those standards. But the initiative still comes and should come primarily from many local agencies and groups. Provision is made for local groups, who feel that they have been unjustifiably bypassed by official community action boards, to submit their projects directly for consideration by the federal funding agency.

We fully recognize that many aspects of the war on poverty transcend the local community, and many of the resources required for its successful prosecution must be mobilized on a national level. Within the framework of local-state-federal partnership, we commend the emphasis in this Act upon maximum local initiative, imaginative creativity, and flexibility.

We warn against the almost inevitable tendencies toward bureaucratization in programs of his sort. We disapprove of an unlimited veto by any local or state official on community action projects as being a violation of the principle of local autonomy. We call for resistance to any tendencies to impose political domination upon community action programs.

We urge the churches to support the principles of openness, flexibility, and local initiative in community action.

As long as it can be clearly indicated that they represent the real needs of the poor, either expressed or felt, and not the needs of the group or agency, we welcome and support a policy of federal funding for projects sponsored by voluntary groups and agencies a) for pilot demonstration purposes; b) where specialized competence is thus utilized; or c) in cases where public proposals are clearly inadequate in conception or fail to be inclusive in sponsorship.

RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO PUBLIC ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAMS

Types of participation and action in relation to public anti-poverty programs which we believe to be suitable for local churches and religious agencies include:

a. Encouragement of both clergy and laity to serve on community action boards and advisory committees.
b. Contribution of church or agency facilities for anti-poverty program uses, or rental of such facilities, provided the compensation received from public funds is not in excess of actual costs incurred in connection with the program itself.
c. Participation by clergy or employed agency staff on a volunteer basis in program leadership.
d. Free expression of the church's corporate judgment in evaluation, support, criticism, or protest with regard to anti-poverty programs.
e. Sponsorship, within the limits established by its own policy and by law, of new or improved legislation designed to advance the cause of elimination of poverty; and under the same limitations, opposition to present laws or proposed legislation deemed inimical to this goal.

A society, in which abundance replaces scarcity and social structures are increasingly complex, demands reappraisal of traditional forms and relationships. The federal government is embarking upon new forms of social action which involve new relationships with the states, with local communities, and with voluntary agencies. These facts, as well as the challenge to eliminate poverty, to recognize and enhance the dignity of the poor, and to further the goal of justice in economic life, call upon us to re-think the role of the Church as servant and prophet. The Church must be alert to every opportunity for moving toward the goal of a society free from the blight of poverty.

99 FOR, 0 AGAINST, 2 ABSTENTIONS

RESOLUTION ON FUNDING ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAMS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL BOARD ON FEBRUARY 21, 1967

In view of the policy position of the National Council of Churches in support of the war on poverty (Policy Statement on The Church and the Anti-Poverty Program—General Board, December 3, 1966) and in view of widespread reports of pressure upon Congress to reduce funds available to the Office of Economic Opportunity and other federal anti-poverty programs;