

law's provision authorizing the Director of OEO to waive even the 10-percent requirement when this amount would produce a hardship to local antipoverty programs.

G. The CCAP supports the recommendations of the administration to increase from 5 percent to 10 percent the moneys available for demonstration and research purposes.

H. Crucial to successful national and local antipoverty planning is the extending of congressional authorization for OEA programs from the present 1 to 2 years or more. This would allow communities to plan ahead and to better facilitate the hiring of quality personnel. The uncertainty of year-to-year authorization only serves to add confusion to the very difficult and complex task of eliminating poverty.

I. In addition, we urge this Congress to create a Joint Congressional Committee on Poverty not only to recommit the Nation to what should be its No. 1 priority, but, in a systematic way, to gather and disseminate the best knowledge about eliminating poverty.

II. THE ISSUE BEFORE THE NATION

The most important domestic issue in this Congress is the war against poverty. What at one time were seen as remedies to this great domestic problem have fallen far short of solutions. Poverty has persisted as a cancerous sore imbedded in our communities. In suffering, cynicism, anger, and as a challenge to our democratic system, its costs are enormous.

We have begun, though much too slowly, to launch new programs, many of them important deviations from the old, ineffective ways of attacking these problems.

There are fundamental dangers in our solutions if we proceed to launch programs based alone on our crisis reactions to issues or on commonly advertised, facile panaceas to these problems. Tragically, poverty is a part of the fabric of American life. If the goal of attacking poverty in America is basic institutional change, it is important that the change be in keeping with basic goals of our society. Too often, in our anxiety to solve problems, we have developed strategies whose primary thrust has been "on target," but whose secondary effects have produced new problems for the beneficiaries and the society as a whole.

The question before us all must be: Consistent with our need to protect individual opportunity and responsibility as fundamental to a free society, what are the best tools with which to attack poverty?

Poor people are powerless people. People who are powerless do not have the opportunity to be responsible. Yet a free society is dependent upon the actions of responsible individuals. From decisionmaking based upon alternative choices comes the process of acquiring responsibility. This does not take place quickly. It does not happen overnight. Yet it is basic to the preservation of a free society and the elimination of poverty.

Too often, in the name of curing the Nation's ills, we have created machinery which has reduced, rather than extended, individual opportunity and responsibility. Of course, at the program's inception, we haven't seen it in that way. We did not think that much of our public housing would degenerate into bureaucratic paternalism. We did not think that many public welfare programs would become institutionalized, devaluating human life generally.