

Today, this is changing because of the leadership of the OEO and the stimulation of the local community action programs.

Working through 10 autonomous neighborhood service centers, usually with poor people as staff, we have developed a large number of groups which are designed to help individuals to feel a sense of participation while achieving worthwhile goals.

In Cincinnati, community action funds have helped create: 25 community councils, five credit units, 111 block clubs, nine Headstart advisory committees, seven neighborhood welfare committees, four neighborhood housing committees, five consumer education committees, four police-community relation committees, six recreation committees, and a host of other task-oriented committees.

It is a fact that there is now more citizen participation to improve our city in the slum areas than in all the other parts of the city combined.

The people who have the least of everything, including opportunity, are working hardest to make our community a good place to live in.

This is and should continue to be a major purpose of community action. Community action programs were never funded to take the place of the welfare department, the State employment service, the community chest agencies, or city government responsibilities.

Rather and more to the point of these hearings, community action programs were created to bring out the best of these established agencies and to instill hope and interest in the hearts of the poor people so that they would use better the resources available to help them move into the system—the same system that makes this the greatest Nation on earth.

Then, Mr. Chairman, I give some personal observations on the amendments that are being considered, the hardship of the present 20-percent-local-contribution requirement, the earmarking of funds, the tendency to promulgate personnel policies and procedures of the OEO and community action agency and the community action agency program, a plea to try and obtain for the Office of Economic Opportunity more than a year's authorization, and then, five, a request that you consider higher authorization because in Cincinnati under the present legislation we are going to have to cut back more than a million dollars and finally, I want to add my voice to those asking you to revise the movement to dismantle the Office of Economic Opportunity because the OEO is needed on the Federal level the same as the community action is on the local level.

In conclusion, I would like to say as a social worker who has worked 17 years in slum neighborhoods, I know community action is vital to our national effort to create a great and open society.

Members of this committee have demonstrated already their courage by recommending the original legislation. I am here on behalf of the board of trustees, the public and private agencies, the hundreds of people who have responsibility for these local programs, and the poor who benefit from these efforts to confirm your belief in the rightness of this legislation.

Despite public attacks, misleading headlines, charges of mismanagement, or worse, community action under the leadership of the Office of Economic Opportunity is working as the attached program statistics and exhibits clearly indicate.