Mr. ALEXANDER. Yes, sir. Since the Kentucky State——

Chairman PERKINS. Give your full name to the committee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Yes, sir. My name is Alfred Alexander, I am with the Kentucky State Assistance staff, in Frankfort, Ky. I am a field representative working in eastern Kentucky with community action programs.

Since the Kentucky State PA staff was organized in January 1965, we have been able to organize 30 community action programs, all of which have submitted repeated grants for OEO funding under title 204. Twenty-five of the 30 community action agencies have been funded by OEO, and carrying out either grants or conduct administration programs.

We in Kentucky fully support the war on poverty, as it was so ably and effusively enunciated by the Congress in 1964. We are dedicated to the concept of community action, and categorically oppose any attempts to destroy the community action by piecemeal parceling out of these action programs to other agencies. The fight can be most effectively waged under the umbrella of community action.

We in Kentucky feel that many of the very frustrating restrictions Congress has placed on the agency should be loosened. Localities must be given more freedom in deciding their priorities, to pick community action representatives, and to give OEO more coordinating powers, especially at the State level.

Quoting from the Courier-Journal editorial page, July 23, 1967, I believe I may ably reflect the consensus of feeling of the commonwealth:

> The war on poverty should be continued. Many of its innovations are just beginning to show results. Many of its experiments are beginning to be accepted, and win local community financing. The saving sparks of imagination and compassion it has introduced into our glum and stagnant attitudes on relief and welfare are well worth what it has cost and what it still might cost.

Mr. FRAZIER. You might mention short-term funding and special conditions.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Well, to summarize it, Mr. Chairman, I would like to probably speak freely without the notes.

Chairman PERKINS. Go ahead.

Mr. ALEXANDER. One feels that the community action as within the original intent of the Congress was to give programs to be initiated at the local level. Well, it appears that this has just been reversed. Most of the programs have been, so to speak, canned programs, coming down from the national level, handed to the communities, to tell what the communities should use, and superimpose on their people.

This is not real community action. Programs should be developed at the grassroots level, and go up to the top from the local people's ideas, so with the shortage of OEO funds, they came out with priorities, for these priorities don't all necessarily grow with the local people's needs. The priorities in urban areas may not be the priorities of the rural, isolated community in east Kentucky.

So we strongly oppose prescribed programs and canned programs. We feel in eastern Kentucky that the programs should be initiated at the local level, developed at the local level, so that the people themselves feel that they have a part in developing their own destiny. So with the short-term funding that OEO has now begun to use, coupled