

am president of the local poverty organization which serves the area outlined on this map.

There are four counties, one metropolitan area covering about 258,000 people.

About 2 years ago we established a no-profit corporation with a high amount of business participation and business leadership.

Chairman PERKINS. You are down next to me.

Mr. BRAND. Yes, sir. We have had programs going for about 2 years and we published an annual report which is attached to my statement and which I furnished to the committees with 50 copies and if it is appropriate it could be inserted in the record and I would be happy to answer any question you have on that.

Chairman PERKINS. Without objection it will be inserted in the record.

Mr. BRAND. To summarize my basic point, as a result of my 2 years' experience in working with a local community action organization, I am convinced that the Economic Opportunity Act is a good bill, that it is a good business investment, that it will pay for itself in the investment of people and if possible the program should be expanded.

As far as the issue of the role of the central office of Economic Opportunity, as I say in my statement, I am firmly opposed to the dismantling of OEO and distributing antipoverty programs into other agencies of the Government.

In saying this I am not criticizing the other agencies because each with its specialty has been most helpful but the responsibility of OEO is the poor people of this country. Our local community action program is stronger because of the involvement and the participation of the poor in all of our activities and the poor are encouraged to participate because they are beginning to find out they have a voice locally and they have a voice in Washington through a Central Agency which is their representation exclusively.

I have in my statement, Mr. Chairman, three constructive suggestions for changing the Economic Opportunity bill.

Chairman PERKINS. Give us those suggestions.

Mr. BRAND. The first would be to improve the communication with the people of the United States to let them know what the antipoverty program is all about. Most people don't understand it. They think it is a Washington program when actually it is a local program.

If a local Community Action organization is not formed, if it does not identify local needs, there is no program, and if local people are not involved there is no program. The Economic Opportunity Act gives people an opportunity to develop their own programs but this is not understood by the American people. There is a misconception about handouts because in this program as you know there are no handouts.

The second suggestion that I have is that the information and evaluation techniques and procedures must be expanded. The amount of money we are spending now for the antipoverty program is only a small amount of what will have to be spent later in one form or another when our resources are greater.

We must know accurately what we are doing right and what we are doing wrong. This is another reason for central OEO, but more independent evaluation must be made at the national and the local level.