Chairman of your Committee, Congressman Perkins, on July 7, 1967 and have sent copies of this letter to each member of your committee. I hope this letter can be made a part of this record, so I will not repeat views already expressed.

Two years ago, the City of Roanoke and the counties of Roanoke and Botetourt established a coordinated community action program for the whle Roanoke Valley. This was later expanded to include Bedford and Rockbridge counties. The area is shown on this map and includes a total population of about 258,000 people, with one metropolitan area, the City of Roanoke, but including large, sparsely populated rural areas.

We established a non-profit corporation covering this entire area with a Board of Directors from all segments of our society and with a large businessman participation. Our organization is called TAP, Total Action Against Poverty in the Roanoke Valley.

I am very enthusiastic about the programs we have underway and the progress we are making. The community is responsive and enthusiastic. This is reflected by the favorable press and editorial coverage and the cooperation of everyone involved. Attached to our original funding application were endorsements from over 100 local groups, including all the governments involved at that time, every business and manufacturing association, every Chamber of Commerce, the local Bar Associations, the medical societies, the professional welfare organization, each school board and school superintendent, most church groups and so on. Most of our local funds have been provided in-kind by business, churches and governmental units.

The Economic Opportunity Act has provided hope and positive self-help programs for the disadvantaged poor who were neglected for so long. As a businessman, I heartily support the Economic Opportunity Act which allowed all of this to come about and hope that it will be expanded as much as possible. I congratulate you and the entire Congress for having the foresight to pass this constructive bill.

I will not go into the details of the specific programs we have underway in Roanoke, as they are reported in the Annual Report, which I have attached to this statement. However, I will be happy to answer any questions about that.

While we are working hard, many of us as volunteers, our job is just beginning. OEO at the national level has provided us with the guidance, suggested techniques and programs, and actually got us started.

There is an interesting point in our organization. The Bedford County Board of Supervisors is opposed to the Anti-Poverty Program and has refused to participate. Yet our community action organization extends to the people in Bedford County and with whose support we have been able to conduct Headstart, a day care program and Neighborhood Development. This is one of the best reasons why an independent community action organization is vital to the success at the local level of any Anti-Poverty Program. Without it, the existing agencies would have their hands tied. One example of the effectiveness of a multi-area community action organization is the way Headstart was handled in our area. We coordinated Headstart with four separate school administrations and in effect, delegated to each school system which ran their own program.

I am firmly opposed to dismantling the Office of Economic Opportunity and disbursing the Anti-Poverty Programs into other agencies of the government. In saying this, I am not critizing the other agencies, because each with its specialty, has been most helpful. But the specialty 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 in Washington—through a central agency which is their representative exclusively.

In my opinion, OEO should be strengthened, not weakened. It should continue to be an independent agency. It should continue to be the agency which operates as opposed to one which merely coordinates. Certainly, for the time being, it should continue to operate all of its current programs.

To my knowledge, no other agency of the government has had much experience in attacking the poverty problem except OEO. The Labor Department has manpower training programs, but prior to OEO, had no experience in developing special programs for the hard core poverty population.

HEW has had experience in health, educational and welfare programs, but has had very little experience in developing special programs for the poverty families.

We must remember that 12 years of public schooling have been available to all American people. We would have very little poverty in the United States if