

3302 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1967

and our local community action program is developing such techniques with great success. Our school system is not set up to do any kind of in-home work. To attempt to delegate the responsibility for breaking the cycle of poverty to the existing organizations is folly, because they have had this opportunity for several generations and it failed.

From my knowledge of federal programs and there are very few of them which I am in favor of, the Office of Economic Opportunity is the most efficient. It has a total administrative cost, including personnel, facilities and everything related to the central bureau, of just 3%. The novel programs which this 3% separate organization has created such as Headstart, Job Corps, Neighborhood Development, Neighborhood Youth Corps, SERVE, Upward Bound, Legal Aid, Foster Grandparents and many others shows the benefit of having a central organization coordinating all special poverty programs. All of these programs are new. The existing federal agencies did not conceive of a single one of them. OEO initiated them all. And they will initiate many more if they are left intact and have the opportunity.

About 25% of the American population is still in poverty. While this is a large figure, it is still a minority of our population. It's natural that HEW with its educational and training programs will concentrate on the majority of our people. We need a special organization such as OEO to develop specific programs for this minority. It is making progress and it can solve the problem in another 10 or 15 years, if given the opportunity.

If the Congress of the United States dismantles OEO and says, in effect, it's not important, then the Congress must bear the responsibility for the consequences. I am sure I would lose interest as would many other dedicated local workers.

In a recent letter to me from Senator Harry Byrd, Jr., he said, "If the poverty program is continued, I want to see that the money goes to people who need it the most". My reply to him pointed out that no money in this program goes to people. Ninety percent of all the money which is expended for the poverty program in the Roanoke Valley is used for education and training. This means that the money is spent for teachers salaries, schools and other related costs to education. The people who need the help are receiving help in the form of schooling so that they can qualify for a job and get to work. The answer to the poverty problem is very simply to do what is required to get people who are in poverty into society and into a job. Since the definition of poverty is a family of four who earns less than \$3,000, the obvious way to cure the problem is see that these people get jobs which pay them more than \$3,000. That is exactly what we are trying to do.

There is no welfare or other handouts in this program. OEO has done a magnificent job in developing the new concepts pointed out above and they are working. In the Roanoke Valley, we have a 40% dropout rate. Imagine 40% of our seventh grade students do not graduate from high school. Yet many of our industries will not accept an application from a non-high school graduate. We are trying hard to develop programs and motivational techniques to keep these children in school and to train adults beyond the public school age for better jobs.

I urge you to visit our local program and see for yourself the effectiveness of what we are trying to do locally in this area to upgrade 25% of our people. I do not believe that any Congressman would vote to discontinue the present work if they knew the facts—unless the vote would be political in nature. And in the words of Billy Graham, I certainly hope that the poverty problem can be kept out of politics.

Last Friday, I spent the afternoon at the Chamber of Commerce of the United States talking to their research people and economists on their views of the poverty program. Three weeks ago, I joined 40 other business executives at a think session at Airlee, where political, social and economic problems were discussed with Chamber executives and with many of the outstanding leaders of our country. I am enclosing a copy of my letter to Mr. Arch Booth, head of the United States Chamber and a point by point comment on their recommendations towards the poverty legislation. I hope that this will be helpful to you.

If there is anything further that we can do in our area to help bring the facts before Congress, please do not hesitate to call on me.

Sincerely,

CABELL BRAND, *President.*