

We believe that the principle and strategy undergirding the Economic Opportunity programs which is based on the maximum feasible participation of the poor is the most important single aspect of the entire program. It is this element which distinguishes the Economic Opportunity Act from all other poverty programs, for it is this element which removes the present endeavor from the extending of charity to the extension of democracy. It is this element which recognizes the humanness of the poor, a recognition desperately needed in the face of the dehumanizing affects of poverty.

We feel that the continuing success of the OEO programs depends upon the recognition that much of the program must be innovative, and that we must build on what we learn through experimentation. It is essential that we encourage pilot demonstration projects. We can abandon those projects which do not show promise; we can expand those projects which prove successful. We do this without question in the physical sciences; we certainly should be able to do it in finding the answers to human and social distress. For this reason we believe that the aspect of Title II regarding the conduct of research and demonstrations, should be expanded and that this aspect of the program should receive adequate funding.

Another element which is crucial in the OEO program is the utilization and integration of two types of personnel: (1) skilled professional people—educators, social workers, city planners, and others, to administer the programs; and (2) the poor themselves to be employed in tasks which, with professional guidance, they are qualified to perform. It will be difficult to attract people with the necessary technical competence, creativity and vision to administer the programs if there are salary limitations placed upon professional personnel. The competition for these qualified people is great, and the OEO programs and Community Action programs need the best persons available to assure the success of the program. We are opposed to the salary limitations placed upon employees as specified in Title II, Section 244 of the proposed amendments. At the same time, salaries should be placed at a realistic level related to the job to be performed and the competence of the person to be employed.

The Act, as Amended in 1966, requires that organizations participating as sponsors in OEO-funded programs contribute 20% of the cost after June 30, 1967. The Proposed Amendments maintain this requirement. While recognizing that this provision also authorizes the Director of OEO to finance assistance in excess of 80%, we feel that many organizations which contribute valuable projects and services, and have a great potential for helping the poor, will be inhibited from doing so by virtue of the 20% required of them. This is particularly true of the voluntary non-profit organizations which raise their funds through voluntary contributions. Above all, this requirement will severely handicap the efforts of the poor themselves, who seek to establish real grass roots organizations to fight poverty. We are sure that experience will demonstrate that those private organizations, which are as essential as the tax-supported organizations, will be the least able to comply with this 20% contribution towards the total cost of the program.

We question the broad generalizations contained in Section 105(a), on screening and selection, which can be arbitrarily interpreted, and which tend to discriminate against a particular group of individuals who may stand to benefit most from the opportunity to participate in the Job Corps program.

We endorse Section 111, Community Participation, which provides that the Director shall encourage and cooperate in activities designed to establish mutually beneficial relationships between Job Corps Centers and surrounding or nearby communities. We would hope that through this provision the types of programs which have been developed by civilian communities and nearby military installations would be developed for the Job Corps enrollee. We pledge to seek the cooperation of our constituencies in carrying out the laudable objectives of this section of the proposed Bill.

We also endorse Section 112, Placement and Followthrough, whereby the Director of OEO shall provide or arrange for necessary services to assist enrollees to secure suitable employment or further training opportunities, to return to school or to pursue their education, or to undertake some other activity having a career potential. We are pleased to note that already an effort is under way through Joint Action in Community Service, Inc., to assist the Job Corps graduate to secure the necessary services from public and voluntary agencies in getting a satisfactory initial and continuing adjustment in his community.

We believe one of the requirements of Section 221(c), namely, "to resolve all issues of cooperation and possible duplication prior to its (application for