

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1967 3717

Coordinating Committee created to effectuate Florida farmworker unionization.

Congressman Gubser reported in the *Congressional Record* of March 22, 1967, the extensive record of the California Center for Community Development in aiding unionization of farmworkers, a record leading eventually to a veto by Governor Reagan of an allocation of OEO funds to this agency.

We submit that it is no part of the function of government to aid in planning and financing unionization of any group of workers.

We urge inclusion in the Act of an amendment to prohibit the use of OEO funds to pay salaries or expenses of any person engaged in union membership drives or associated boycott activities, and to require repayment of any funds so used.

THE NATIONAL EFFORT TO REDUCE POVERTY

Concern with poverty is a historic concern of the people of the U.S. It is a basic purpose of our economic system, which has indeed been more effective than any system the world has known in providing opportunity for individuals to escape from poverty. It could with justification be called the "opportunity system." This system has done more than any other to provide opportunity for individuals to improve their lot.

Further, innumerable public policies and programs by local, state, and federal governments have had the elimination of poverty as a fundamental purpose.

Thus our whole economic and political system and a major purpose of most private and public efforts are directed to this goal.

The groups of programs incorporated in the Economic Opportunity Act are but one small segment of the total national effort to eliminate poverty.

At our most recent annual meeting the voting delegates of the member State Farm Bureaus expressed doubt that these programs are making any substantial contribution to the total national effort to eliminate poverty and expressed the opinion that the administration of these programs has been marked by "confusion, waste and duplication of effort."

As is true with respect to almost all problems, maximum success in reducing poverty depends on a high level of economic growth without inflation. We believe that "The Federal government can most effectively contribute to a high level of employment by following policies which tend to stabilize the general price level and create a favorable climate for individual incentive and private economic development."

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

Current estimates relative to the size of the federal deficit in fiscal 1968 range from \$11 to \$29 billion, depending on various assumptions. The outlook is for the largest peacetime deficit in 1968.

The Tax Foundation estimated recently that the total amount of taxes collected by all units of government in fiscal 1967 will be \$203 billion—or an average of \$3,300 per family. This is more than twice the total tax collections for fiscal 1956. The trend of taxes and expenditures by all units of government is continuing its upward trend in fiscal 1968.

We believe that under such circumstances it is imperative that the Congress reduce non-defense spending. Polls made by individual Representatives and placed in the *Congressional Record* since the first of the year indicate that most citizens are looking to the Congress to reduce federal non-defense expenditures substantially.

The Joint Economic Committee recommended recently that "Congress must find ways to reduce expenditures for fiscal 1968 by at least \$5 billion to \$6 billion per year."

In our concern with helping the poor, we should also be concerned about the "forgotten man," the long-suffering taxpayer. The people of the United States have demonstrated their willingness to pay substantial amounts of taxes to help the less fortunate. But we believe their patience with a chronic escalation of tax expenditures has about reached the breaking point.

Farm Bureau has on numerous occasions sought to reduce federal expenditures for farm programs. We are supporting bills to reduce such expenditures in this Congress.

We believe that the poverty program is another area of non-defense expenditures for which substantial reductions in expenditures are called for. In our testimony to the House Appropriations Committee we have recommended reductions in federal expenditures exceeding \$5 billion. Included in this statement was a recommendation that the amount appropriated for the anti-poverty program for fiscal 1968 be not more than \$1,406 million.