

accomplishment made possible by the two-year-old War on Poverty, brought the human values of the program into sharp focus.

A middle-aged Indian woman said: "So many people who had never been reached before were able to come to the center for so many things."

A Negro man, a native of Detroit, pleaded for Federal assistance, particularly to youth, to prevent riots from occurring. "I know every step of it," he said. "I know what every one of those children has to go through."

And a Negro woman, mother of five and a recipient of aid to families of dependent children, said: "We will only have equality when the Negro is no longer poor."

The delegation's trip to Washington was a moving and forceful example of the effectiveness of grass-roots action by the actual victims of poverty who are working to improve their situation. I wish that every Member of Congress would have this kind of opportunity to meet with similar groups from his district. Such meetings would, I think, assure the future of the War on Poverty.

The visit of these representatives of the Minneapolis poor was made in May, some two months before riots erupted in dozens of U.S. cities—including Minneapolis. These riots, in my opinion, emphasize the necessity of continuing to wage the War on Poverty on a much broader scale than it has been waged so far. During the coming months and years, Congress and the executive branch will be deeply involved in vast efforts to head off future riots by eliminating their causes. It has been said many times, and will be said many more, that one of the elemental causes of riots is poverty, with all its degrading and corrosive effects. The Office of Economic Opportunity will be in the vanguard of whatever Federal action is taken to repair the tragic damage already done to our nation and to avert future tragedies. Enactment of H.R. 8311 has a new urgency.

WOODROW WILSON SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL
AFFAIRS, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY,
Princeton, N.J., July 26, 1967.

HON. CARL D. PERKINS,
*Chairman, Committee on Education and Labor, U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I have had an opportunity to review the two bills, H.R. 8311, "Economic Opportunity Amendments of 1967"; and H.R. 10682, "Opportunity Crusade Act of 1967" both of which support the need for a national attack on poverty and the anti-poverty programs developed by the Office of Economic Opportunity in recent years. As I read these bills, the most serious difference between them is the organizational arrangements for administering these programs. The critical question is whether the OEO should be continued as an independent agency to direct the national drive to combat poverty or whether the functions of the OEO should be transferred, as H.R. 10682 proposes, to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; Defense; and Labor.

I am writing in support of H.R. 8311 and the maintenance and strengthening of the Office of Economic Opportunity as the directing force of the nation's campaign to minimize and evaluate poverty. My principal reason is the conviction that the unified direction of these programs by a single agency unburdened by other responsibilities is more likely to produce the leadership, motivation, and technical skills that are needed to achieve the objectives of these bills.

The assignment of administrative responsibility for these related anti-poverty programs to several cabinet departments, as H.R. 10682 proposes, is likely to reduce the effectiveness of these programs for two reasons. First, leadership of the program would be diluted; and, second, these programs would have to compete for administrative direction, interest, and talent with the host of programs already administered by the Departments concerned. It seems most unlikely that the Secretaries heading these Departments can give the high priority and close direction to these antipoverty programs that would be provided by the Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity.

Since these anti-poverty programs are, for the most part, novel and therefore require thoughtful and courageous administration and continuing evaluation, departmentalization appears to be premature and likely to reduce their vigor and effectiveness.

Sincerely yours,

MARVER H. BERNSTEIN,
Dean.