THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS,
Santa Barbara, Calif., June 15, 1967.

Hon. CARL PERKINS,
Chairman, House Committee on Education and Labor,
Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE PERKINS: The League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara has spent a good part of two years studying the Economic Opportunity Act and the local activity under the Act. We are writing in support of the Economic Opportunity Act Amendments of 1967.

We believe that the Office of Economic Opportunity is essential to the effective administration of the Act. Although the working of the Act as the authority passes down through the regional offices to the local Community Action Committee has not always been smooth, we believe it is necessary to have a single federal agency responsive to the needs of the poor, and coordinating the programs. Further diffusion of authority would greatly complicate carrying out the program.

In Santa Barbara County, where the Santa Barbara League has had an observer at all meetings of the Community Action Committee, we feel the programs got off to a slow start, and delays in refunding and the provision of the allotted funds at a still later date have made great and discouraging difficulties for the operating agencies. Innovation and new ways of carrying out programs have always to work against initial conservatism and doubt, but are essential if we are to find new ways to solve the problems of poverty.

Our projects include the Guadelupe Community Council, Neighborhood Youth Corps, Planned Parenthood and Head Start. Such projects do not lend themselves to short term evaluation, since the results cannot be measured within a short time. It is felt that they offer promise for our community, and that other projects which have been presented might have been approved if it were not for the constant concern about the availability of funds.

The Community Action Committee has had difficulty in working out the requirement that representatives of the poor be elected by their own group. This has met with delays, but the Committee is now meeting the requirements.

The League supports amending the present act to include more specific provisions for evaluation, as the projects have been in operation long enough now to provide some data. This evaluation should be made both by OEO itself and by outside experts. We support increased funds for demonstration and research, both of which are essential to the successful operation of new programs. We are opposed to the earmarking in the 1966 Amendments which cut back funds for locally developed programs.

Basic education, work training and experience for both youth and adults should be encouraged. A great need is better communication and understanding between the local and regional office. Top level reorganization would only confuse and delay movement toward greater results.

Sincerely yours,

MRS. JOHN S. KENDRICK, PRESIDENT.

NEWARK COUNCIL OF CHURCH WOMEN,
August 9, 1967.

Hon. CARL PERKINS,
Chairman, Education and Labor Committee,
House Office Building,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. PERKINS: In view of the fact that Congress is considering cutting off the appropriation for anti-poverty in Newark we, the Newark Council of Church Women United, are writing in an effort to plead with you to urge Congress to continue this Fund because of the very desperate need for such money because of the recent appalling events that have taken place in Newark. We Church Women feel that not only should there be no attempt to cut, but that the Fund should be increased since these programs are the only way of alleviating these ills in our community and are really the only alternative to a very devastating and costly welfare system to combat poverty in our City and also to lift the morale and build up the dignity of people and, in this way, they can be self-supporting. This also will serve to remedy some of the inequities in our City.

Newark Council of Church Women United are conscientiously concerned with all the aspects of the Anti-Poverty Program and strongly endorse the continuance