

3768 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1967

or work with other local agencies. The problem is much too complex and deep to seriously think that the Neighborhood Centers can aid in such paramount problems as housing and unemployment of the hard core. I wish to make it known to you that in this instance the Neighborhood Centers are a worthwhile investment and have done much to mobilize the community toward a hopeful outlook of their dim existence.

The Neighborhood Youth Corps is serviced by two other agencies—they are the Intermediate School District of Muskegon County and the Urban League. The school system is handling the Neighborhood Youth Corps for in-school children, whereas the Urban League is managing the program for out-of-school dropouts. In both cases I find that the programs are well managed in helping to solve the problem of unemployment among the youth. I might add that the number of slots available is 180 (one hundred and eighty) and is far from being adequate for the need that exists in Muskegon County.

At the present time there are three Headstart Programs in Muskegon serving 450 (four hundred and fifty) youngsters—all three of which are administered by school systems in serving the poor in a fashion that is exemplary. Although I have not visited the Headstart programs, I have talked with a few who are involved, only to find much acceptance and enthusiastic support. The same is true with the Upward Bound Project at Western Michigan University—which is serving approximately 30 (thirty) youngsters from this area. The design of the Upward Bound Program is in keeping with the realistic needs of our community which is trying to solve the problems of the youth.

The County Health Department serves as a Delegate Agency and is satisfying the medical needs of the Headstart Programs and the Neighborhood Center Programs. It is a progressive department which was previously led by Dr. Sweda who gave direction in keeping with OEO philosophy.

We have a Legal Aid Program which is serving the needs of our community although it is handicapped by a Board which does not see fit to permit divorces among the poor. In spite of this shortcoming, it is an outstanding program and one I most enthusiastically support.

As a public official involved in a diversified industrial community plagued with the problems of slums, unemployment and the general needs of the poor—I should like to close by stating categorically that the OEO Program is a step in the right direction toward solving some of the problems of our complex society. More needs to be done such as housing and an awakening of the private sector to their responsibilities in the tremendous battle we have in saving the inner city from itself.

Our municipal government is, of course, attempting to accomplish those program and policy issues which properly fall within its responsibility and which produces the best results from both operations. I refer to slum clearance and public housing, Urban Renewal projects, housing codes, systematic inspections and open housing ordinances. We have most recently applied for selection under the Model Cities Act.

Our efforts seek to improve environmental standards in the firm belief that the sociological and educational programs of OEO will dramatically demonstrate that much can be accomplished with a total attack on the causes of poverty.

I greatly appreciate this opportunity and hope that this letter will serve a good purpose in your hearings.

Sincerely yours,

DONALD E. JOHNSON,
Mayor, City of Muskegon.

STATEMENT OF NED GOLDBERG, CONSULTANT, ANTIPOVERTY PROGRAMS, NATIONAL FEDERATION OF SETTLEMENTS AND NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS, NEW YORK, N.Y.

We welcome this opportunity to present the views of the National Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers, Inc., on H.R. 8311, the Economic Opportunity Amendments of 1967. In the past, our agency has supported before this Committee a wide range of anti-poverty measures and, in 1964, President Johnson's proposal for an Economic Opportunity Act.

We support the major proposals and intent of H.R. 8311, but are opposed specifically to some of the amendments proposed as we shall indicate below. Further, we are opposed to any Bill which would, at this time, eliminate the Office of Economic Opportunity and distribute its programs to other Federal agencies.