

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1967 3785

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SOUTH CAROLINA,
Columbia, July 5, 1967.

HON. CARL D. PERKINS,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. PERKINS: In regard to the Administration bill on Economic Opportunity (H.R. 8311), the League of Women Voters of South Carolina would like to express its support of the Office of Economic Opportunity. We believe that there is value in having a single federal agency responsive to the needs of the poor, and responsible for originating, coordinating, and evaluating programs related to those needs. We believe that the Office of Economic Opportunity has shown imagination in developing new programs for the poor, and we feel that the innovative nature of these programs has been beneficial.

In South Carolina, OEO programs had reached (as of March 24, 1967) 165,070 people. These programs now operate in all 46 counties, and they have been sensitive to the needs of the poor in a way that other programs have not. Community Action Programs alone, operating in 44 counties, have reached a total of 81,613 people (March 1967), and we give highest priority to the continuation of this particular program of OEO. The Adult Basic Education programs, which operate in all counties, have reached 20,728 people, and last summer's Head Start program enrolled 19,916 children. A new program in adult education and vocational training undertaken by the S.C. Economic Opportunity Board in association with the State Board of Education, Project T-Square, recently opened its first of twelve proposed centers with far more applicants than it will be able to enroll for many months.

Because we feel that these and other OEO programs are meeting a need which established agencies had not been able to meet (and in many cases had not identified), we support their continuation in South Carolina, and we feel that the situation on the national level is similar.

We are therefore opposed to the present efforts to cut back or "spin off" programs to other agencies, but favor instead amending the present act to include more specific provisions for evaluation both by OEO itself and outside professionals. We also support increased funds for research and pilot demonstration projects.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. SHERROD BUMGARDNER,
President.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CHICAGO.
Chicago, Ill., July 10, 1967.

HON. FRANK ANNUNZIO,
House Office Building, Washington, D.C.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN ANNUNZIO: As you know, the League of Women Voters of the United States and all local Leagues have followed with great interest the development of the war on poverty since the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. The League has a strong consensus from its members supporting those national programs which were designed to further equality of opportunity in education and employment.

Here in Chicago, the Office of Economic Opportunity has launched a series of innovative programs, reflecting a sensitivity to the basic inequalities facing the hard-core poor. This single agency has been particularly responsive to the needs of the poor, as well as being responsible for originating, coordinating and evaluating programs related to those needs. We feel that it is important to strengthen the OEO at the national and local levels to insure the continuation of these functions, and to insure that programs administered by other agencies are actually directed to the needs of the poor.

It is our strong feeling that the time has come for sophisticated evaluation of program results, rather than drastic changes and cutbacks. We have seen the disheartening effects of cutbacks in Community Action Programs (CAP) in Chicago. Programs, like Jobs-for-Teens, were moving into the operating stage and making significant breakthroughs when funding was reduced or completely eliminated. It has become apparent that CAP is the vital element for encouraging social progress in our community by stimulating initiative, innovation and participation. It will become increasingly important to foster new and imaginative