

3786 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1967

programs to create change and maintain the momentum of current programs. Adequate funds must be available at every level.

We urge you to consider the necessity of strengthening the Office of Economic Opportunity so that it may meet the expectations which the Economic Act created.

Sincerely,

Mrs. HANS W. MATTICK,
President.

BURLINGTON, IOWA, June 22, 1967.

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

DEAR SIR: As an individual and as chairman of the Human Resources Committee of the Burlington, Iowa, League of Women Voters, I urge you to vote in the affirmative when the Economic Opportunity Act Amendments of 1967 (H.R. 8311) are before the House. We are most concerned about those of Title I which deal specifically with Amendments to the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.

The League (and I as an individual) is opposed to abolishing the Office of Economic Opportunity as proposed by the "Opportunity Crusade." There is value in having a single federal agency responsive to the needs of the poor and responsible for the difficult job of originating, coordinating and evaluating programs related to those needs. It is important at this point to work to strengthen rather than weaken the initiating and coordinating roles of the Community Action Program on the national and local levels, and it is difficult to see how this would be accomplished by transferring CAP to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Established agencies had not been overly sensitive to the basic inequalities faced by the hard-core poor in the United States, and there is no reason to believe that they would again. In contrast, OEO has been imaginative in its development of new programs. While coordination of the various poverty programs run by different government agencies has not always been smooth, there is little reason to see why disbanding OEO or "spinning off" major programs would improve relationships between, for example, HEW and the Departments of Labor, Agriculture, and Housing and Urban Development. Rather, the coordination role of OEO and CAP (on the local as well as national level) should be buttressed in order to better insure that poverty programs administered by other agencies (including delegated EOA programs) actually are directed to the needs of the poor.

As mentioned above, the League is giving highest priority in its concern to the continuation of the Community Action Program, which, by stimulating local initiative, innovation, and participation of the groups to be served, has become a vital element for encouraging social progress in hundreds of communities throughout the country. We are opposed to the kind of earmarking of funds done in the 1966 Amendments, and it is encouraging to note that the proposed Economic Opportunity Amendments of 1967 not only propose increased funds, but the CAP funds are not earmarked. The League also supports other EOA programs including those that provide basic education, work-training and experience for both adults and youth.

Here in Burlington our CAP programs are just beginning to get under way and it would be tragic if funds were either cutback or cut off completely. The Homemakers' Service has been very beneficial to the elderly, chronically ill, mothers with new babies, etc., meeting a real need in Burlington. This summer 78 children are enrolled in Head Start. A constructive result of the Head Start program two years ago was the organizing of the Parents in Action group, made up of the parents of Head Start children. This group continues to meet regularly and has been of great value to the parents.

If the program begun by Head Start is to have lasting value, however, it needs to be a year-round project, and plans are being developed to launch such a project in the fall—if OEO funds become available. A Planned Parenthood Clinic—formed initially to serve Head Start parents and others in the target group—is also in the planning stage. If these two "babies" are not allowed to be "born," real assistance to the target group will be lost.

We urge you again to vote for the Economic Opportunity Act Amendments of 1967. Specifically, it seems to us in the League that the local Community Action