

3788 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1967

Amendments of 1967 (H.R. 8311). We urge you in your important role as Chairman of House Committee on Education and Labor to report out a bill that will clearly indicate that the war on poverty and development of local initiative and self-help are a major priority for 1967. In our estimation this would necessitate the continuation of the OEO in a prime role and above all provide for the continuation and expansion of Community Action Programs.

Our support for Community Action Programs is based on our knowledge of these programs in New York City. For the past several months members of the New York City League have been visiting Community Action Programs throughout the five boroughs. Included were Community Progress Centers in South Jamaica, the Lower West Side, South Bronx, Morrisania, Williamsburg, Brownsville-East New York and Fort Greene. We also visited Bedford Stuyvesant's Youth In Action, HARYOU, MEND, Mobilization for Youth, East Harlem Tenants Council and all the Small Business Development and Opportunity Corporations as well as a number of smaller programs. Members spoke with directors of programs, blockworkers and other staff members in an attempt to find out how CAPS operate in New York City. We are trying to get an over-all impression to determine if CAPS merit continued financing and to see if the original concept of flexibility and involvement of the poor themselves in drawing up programs should be supported.

Members were enthusiastic about the programs visited. They were favorably impressed by most of the people with whom they spoke. They commented on the dedication and enthusiasm of the staff and the positive way in which most of them related to the community, on the firsthand knowledge they had of the area and the number of professionals who lived in the area served by a program. Reports seemed to indicate that the spirit and intent of the CAP legislation was being carried out with a great deal of emphasis on community action. The emphasis indeed was to stimulate initiative rather than dependence. We would like to see this opportunity for the development of local initiative continue, and the widest flexibility be permitted.

Our interest in these programs grows out of our deep concern with the need to continue to combat poverty through the expansion of education and employment opportunities. We are neither a governmental agency nor involved in the expenditure of anti-poverty funds. From our objective viewpoint Community Action Programs are still in the formative stages and while modifications are in order (more long-range fiscal planning, increased cooperation with the private sector, greater involvement of the State, greater participation of the poor in policy-making) any drastic curtailment is very premature.

The League also supports other EOA programs including those that provide basic education, work-training and experience for both adults and youth.

We look forward to hearing that you are in accord with our position on H.R. 8311.

Sincerely,

Mrs. IRWIN TOBACK,
President.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ALEXANDRIA, VA.,
June 25, 1967.

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

DEAR MR. PERKINS: Serious concern was expressed at the May meeting of the National Council of the League of Women Voters in Washington, D.C. over cuts in the appropriations for the Office of Economic Opportunity, and moves in the Congress that threaten the existence of both the Economic Opportunity Act and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

The League of Alexandria, Virginia is particularly interested in assuring the continuation of the Community Action Program, which stimulates local initiative, innovation, and participation of the groups to be served. The Alexandria League supports adequate funds for C.A.P. and is opposed to the kind of earmarking in the 1966 amendments which stringently cut back money for locally-developed programs. We note that proposed O.E.O. amendments of 1967 do not earmark funds, but we fear there may be strong efforts to do so in both Houses of Congress.

The Alexandria Day-Care proposal, which has been delayed for several months because of unresolved issues between our city government and the O.E.O., has now received official approval and funding through O.E.O. to Hopkins House, a