

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1967 3803

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SOUTH SAN MATEO COUNTY, INC.,
Menlo Park, Calif., June 13, 1967.

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

MY DEAR MR. PERKINS: On May 10, five members of our local League attended the San Francisco hearings of the Senate Sub-committee on Employment, Manpower, and Poverty. We heard there that under the Economic Opportunity Act the poor, for the first time, had been brought together, involved in common goals, and given a feeling of dignity.

Although no one from our county testified, these statements could easily have been made by people from East Palo Alto, the poverty area in this part of the county. Although we do not have extensive programs, we do have two centers for Legal Service; a job-training center—OICW; a summer "Learn-while-you-teach" program; two Information Centers; and a Neighborhood Youth Corps which is funded until this coming September.

In order to continue and expand these programs, we urge you to *support* the *Economic Opportunity Amendments of 1967* and to *oppose* the abolishing of the *Office of Economic Opportunity*.

The poor in South San Mateo County know that these programs are far from perfect; some are discouraged and feel that the war on poverty is already lost. But the League is convinced that these groups are beginning to show initiative and to participate in an orderly way. Our community not only needs the programs it already has, it needs funds for expanding these programs and developing new ones. *Community Action programs* are particularly needed, and we hope that final Amendments will not earmark these funds.

Very truly yours,

MARY GRESSLE, *President.*

STATEMENT BY MRS. RICHARD H. HOLTON, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CALIFORNIA

For three years members of the League of Women Voters of California have been researching, studying and discussing poverty programs in our state. We quickly learned that only a small part of the "action" is taking place in Washington where the laws are made; most of the action is here at home where the laws are implemented. In addition to our traditional methods of work, League members have been acting as volunteers in Head Start and tutorial programs, have led courses in parliamentary procedure, leadership training and voter education in target areas, have conducted elections for representatives of the poor to community action boards and have accepted appointment to these boards, often at the urging of the indigenous groups. These are our credentials.

Several of the California Leagues have acquired such extensive knowledge of their local problems that we have urged them to file with your subcommittee information about their specific areas of concern.

What have we learned?

First, we have become acquainted with the tragic extent of poverty in America. Hiding on the other side of our freeways in the cities and in the country are the neighborhoods we thought didn't exist because we had not been forced to see them. We all know by now the statistics of unemployment and the theory of the self-perpetuating poverty cycle. And we have discovered that there are some problems so obvious that they are completely overlooked. League after League has reported that lack of adequate low-cost public transportation has trapped the poor within their ghettos as inevitably as her poor education. And League members, who are mostly housewives, have learned with the shock of recognition that mothers in poverty homes cannot shop economically because—

(1) The budget allows almost no leeway for quantity purchases when prices are low;

(2) There is inadequate storage space in the home; and

(3) Foodstuffs bought for tomorrow are likely to be eaten today by children who don't usually get enough to sate their growing appetites.

We have learned that almost everyone loves Operation Head Start. Nevertheless, we have observed problems. This year there were inadequate funds for all the Head Start programs that were proposed. Relationships among Head Start, local school districts, and the State Department of Education need to be