

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ESCONDIDO,
Escondido, Calif., June 12, 1967.

Re: Economic Opportunity Amendments (H.R. 8311).

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

My DEAR MR. PERKINS: The League of Women Voters of Escondido wants to take this opportunity to urge your support for maintaining the Office of Economic Opportunity. There is value in having a single federal agency responsible to the needs of the poor and responsible for the difficult job of originating and coordinating and evaluating programs related to those needs.

We also strongly support the Community Action Programs which we feel will be strengthened by continuing to be under the O.E.O. In Escondido our Community Action Council has been authorized for only six months. This authorization accomplished county-wide coverage by our Economic Opportunity Commission of San Diego. Expectations are high for the successful implementation of plans which have been in the making for over a year. Fiscal 1968 will be the turning point for O.E.O. to prove its ability to have an impact on equal opportunities for education and employment in the United States.

The members of our local League concurred with League members nationwide in desiring specific provisions for evaluation both by the O.E.O. itself and by outside professionals. Adequate financing in F 1968 will enable such evaluation to be meaningful.

As a result of intensive League study, many of our members have become actively engaged in Economic Opportunity Programs. One such activity is the Women in Community Service (WICS) group which is making a strong impact in Northern San Diego County. Prospective women applicants for the Job Corps are being interviewed, counselled and prepared to gain the maximum benefits from their camp experience, and League members are helping!

The pressures to economize are strong. We feel the pressure to provide programs of a preventive nature should be even stronger. Prevention is cheaper than curing!

Thank you for your consideration of our views in this matter.

Very truly yours,

Mrs. JEAN R. NOVET,
President.

Mrs. JOHN G. REYNOLDS,
National Program Chairman.

STATEMENT BY MRS. MAURICE BENDER, CHAIRMAN OF DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN
RESOURCES COMMITTEE OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF RIVERSIDE, CALIF.

The following statement is submitted in response to field hearings of the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Employment, Manpower, and Poverty in Southern California on May 12, 1967. Our local League wishes to report on the progress and problems we have noted during our two year study of Riverside County Poverty programs.

After an initial year of well-meaning but ineffective attempts to get started, our local O.E.O. programs got off the ground in the fall of 1965 with the appointment of a new Executive Director and reorganization of the local policy-making body, the Economic Opportunity Board of Riverside County. The Director has professional "know how" in community organization and apparent conviction that involving the poor in self-help and extensive use of volunteers will and does produce real gains in anti-poverty efforts. The reorganized Economic Opportunity Board has 12 of its 27 members elected by and from the recipient groups: it sets policy and passes on all locally initiated projects and funding. The Board's structure and functioning provide opportunity for communication and shared responsibility with the recipient groups, as well as the usual civic, governmental and volunteer groups. Our assessment is that the combination of having a highly competent Director and a well-functioning Board is the key to the strength of the poverty program in Riverside County. Especially significant is the extent of volunteer service in locally initiated projects. For example, in one month, November, 1966, 724 volunteers donated 548 eight-hour days work in services ranging from office help and transportation, to teaching youth or Head Start programs.

One example of the strength of the program was the development of 15 Oppor-