

Let me ask you if you feel the county supervisors or county commissioners—I guess they are commissioners in Pennsylvania—are able to fix the priorities that would result in the greatest responsiveness to urgent public needs?

There are a number of problems facing us, and I think Senator Anderson touched upon that, when he spoke about his keen and continuing interest in education.

My question is: Is it wise to earmark the important sources of funds in this matter as would be proposed under this bill, or would you favor giving people at the local level or at the State level a greater degree of authority in determining what their most urgent needs are and letting a decision be made by the State officials and local officials?

Mr. STASEY. Well, I think the State and local officials perhaps are in the best position to make a sound definition of what the needs are. I sometimes think we lack courage in coming up with the decision that is obvious, and we tend to tailor our decisions to what is politically wise. Whether or not it is wise to earmark a specific source of income to a given activity, of course, depends on how limited that source is. If it is limited, there is no problem.

I would say this: Clearly, we need money for education, and we are meeting that need. We are also meeting the need in some of these other areas, but you see, recreation is something that is available to those who are receiving education and those who are not, as well as those who are mentally well and those who are mentally retarded. This is one activity, one reservation, which touches all of the citizens, regardless of whether it is participating in other areas of the society.

Also, I am one who is convinced that we are stewards of the land we occupy, and we have a duty to preserve and protect that land, to pass it on to the next generation in a better form than that in which we found it. Therefore, I think over the long haul the investment is sound.

I think it is unfair to equate expenditures for this purpose as opposed to education or something else. The thing is, both have to be served. I don't think you serve them at the expense of each other.

Senator HANSEN. Do I understand you, then, to imply that you think the needs for recreation are so demanding and so overriding as to justify the action that would be contemplated in this bill? I am sure you have practically all of those programs in Allegheny County. Do you feel this is the single most important need?

Mr. STASEY. At this given time, yes, because as I said earlier, time is not on our side. Time is running out on us in Allegheny County and, I think, in most of the eastern counties in the United States, because, you see, space is our problem. And we are running out of this, because we are in competition with so many other interests for that space.

We think of landing a man on the moon as one of our space projects, and we have a very serious one back in our own county right on the ground.

Senator HANSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Staisey. We appreciate having your comments and your counsel and advice in this matter. Your full statement will be printed in the hearing record.

Mr. STASEY. Thank you very much.