

TESTIMONY OF MISS MARIAN WRIGHT; ACCOMPANIED BY MRS. LELA MAE BROOKS, SUNFLOWER, MISS.; MRS. BARBARA ARSENAULT, BERKELEY, MICH.; VINCENT NEGRON, BROWNSVILLE, N.Y.; GEORGE FRANCIS, PASSAMAQUODDY INDIAN RESERVATION, PERRY, MAINE; AND THOMAS WILLIAMS, JACKSON, MISS.

MISS WRIGHT. Senator Muskie and Senators on the committee, we are very happy for this opportunity to be here before you this morning.

I just want to warn the stenographer that I speak extremely rapidly and at any time she does not get me she should just signal and I shall try to slow down.

My name is Marian Wright. I am from Jackson, Miss. I have been practicing law in Mississippi for 4 years with the Legal Defense Fund of the NAACP. I have with me this morning people who are participating in the Poor People's Campaign. Beginning at my left is Mr. Vinnie Negron from New York City; second from the left is Mrs. Barbara Arsenault, a welfare mother from Berkeley, Mich.; next to me is Mrs. Lela Mae Brooks from Sunflower County, Miss. On my right is Mr. Thomas Williams from Jackson, Miss., a welfare recipient. On my extreme right is Representative George A. Francis from Senator Muskie's State of Maine. He is from Perry, Maine.

All these people, I hope, as soon as I make a general summarizing statement, will speak for approximately 5 to 7 minutes each, depending on how much or what they want to say.

I have not studied your bill, Senator, with a fine tooth comb. I am very happy just to hear the word "coordination" come out again. I commend you for your effort in this direction. There are, however, certain points we want to make to see if we cannot get some consideration by this committee.

Part of the problem in this country is that there are not enough resources put into the causes of the poor. The other half of the problem of dealing with the poor is that those programs that exist are not really reaching the poor.

One in Mississippi and in Alabama and Arkansas and rural Georgia cannot really tell the difference between State and Federal Governments. The sad fact is that in this day, 41½ years after the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and many, many years after decisions requiring equality under the 14th Amendment, the fact is that the Federal Government is still the single largest supporter of segregation and discrimination in this country. And that is a disgrace. It comes from weak, ineffective enforcement of existing laws. It comes from weak, ineffective review of existing programs. And we have to stop pouring money down the same channels which are not solving the problems. I do not know how many years it is going to take us to learn that the old traditional approaches are not doing the job. Yet we persist in putting millions more every year in the same bad programs.

Several things I think need to be done. One of the things that strikes me from a cursory reading of this bill is that there is very little or no provision for citizen participation. I think we have heard in the last couple of years the desire of the people to have some part in the decision making processes of this Government. We cannot talk about