

Studies have shown that welfare recipients also tend to feel that receiving welfare is a privilege which requires them to relinquish some of their individual rights in order to obtain support from society. Welfare programs tend to place recipients in a different class both in their own eyes and the eyes of the larger community. Welfare seems to reinforce the alienation and the low self-esteem that is common among the poor. Even the services offered to recipients of welfare reinforce their isolation in the narrow restrictive manner in which they are offered.

While it is obvious that having the program as we now know it is much better for the millions on welfare than having no program, steps must be taken to eliminate some of the more offensive elements of public assistance programs and to broaden the program realistically to include the many more who need assistance.

There are several basic reforms in the existing programs which I believe to be essential. None of these are original with me.

First, we need a national standard for minimum payments. Payment levels in most States are very low, in most cases below the minimum subsistence levels States themselves define, and below the poverty level. For a woman on AFDC who has three children, for example, 14 States provide \$1 per person per day or less to meet all needs. It is obvious that a level of payment must be set and payments made on the basis of a national standard.

Last year the administration proposed that States be required at least to meet their own minimum subsistence standards, and this first step toward a national minimum standard was rejected even though it permitted, in my view, too much variance among the States.

As a second necessary reform, I believe that persons should be eligible for welfare on the basis of need and on no other basis. Arbitrary considerations about who should and should not be permitted to participate in the program should be banned. Eligibility would be established by a simple declaration of need for support. Use of declarations would imply that we trust poor people as much as we trust the non-poor to declare annually accurate statements of income for tax purposes. The system could be monitored as the tax system is—by random sample checks. This would have the additional virtue of simplifying the legion of bureaucracy which constitutes the welfare system.

As another improvement I would like to propose that we separate welfare services from money assistance. Some persons need the services which the welfare program offers while others need only the money. We should get away from treating those who are on welfare as cases. The services provided by welfare should not be forced on those persons who neither desire nor need them.

A final point is that adults in AFDC families are or have been allowed no earned exemptions under the program as it now stands. This lack of incentive to work is a serious shortcoming of the welfare system. Until quite recently the mother who supplemented her AFDC payments with some meager earnings would find her grant diminished by that amount. Now a third of her earnings may be exempted in calculating her monthly payment—but it is questionable that this is adequate.

I might say parenthetically here, Madam Chairman, that one of the most offensive things about the compulsory work program amendment is that, before these amendments, a mother who wanted to work—and