

Only Congress can correct this indefensible injustice. It can mandate national standards, and in doing so it would necessarily be required to provide a Federal reimbursement formula which would take into account the economic capacity of the State to finance such a standard.

2. ELIMINATION OF CATEGORIES

The board has long urged the elimination of the so-called Federal categories of public assistance.

These categories have been embedded in the Federal public assistance program, dividing up needy people by age or by the condition which created their need. There are dependent children, and families of dependent children, and blind, and aged, and disabled, and persons on home relief receiving general assistance.

This jungle of categories complicates administration and creates more problems for people who already have problems enough.

The board has consistently advocated action by the Federal Government to establish a single category of assistance based upon need. Such action would make Federal financial aid available to all needy persons, including home relief recipients and poor children in foster care who are not now eligible for Federal assistance.

In regard to foster care, in New York State, we have 42,000 children in foster care; that is, in institutions or in family homes. About 95 percent of these children are poor children. They are in these places of care because they are the children of greatest need. They do not have relatives who are in the position to assist them or to properly care for them.

It seems unconscionable to me that the Federal Government has for years provided assistance only when the child is in the home of a relative. In certain States, this has forced, because of the limited money available, children to live in the homes of relatives who really should not be in such homes. They would be better off if they were in a foster-care situation. Because of the dollars involved, the program follows the money, and that is an unfortunate arrangement.

THE PUNITIVE ASPECTS OF THE 1967 SOCIAL SECURITY ACT AMENDMENTS

The board opposed the action of Congress last year in amending the Social Security Act, and today urges the Congress to repeal or modify the restrictive and punitive provisions of these amendments.

In that connection, Madam Chairman, it seems to me our biggest problem with welfare is a philosophical one. We have never made up our minds in this country whether we are going to punish poor people or rehabilitate them. This goes back to the very beginnings of our colonial period, where every effort was made to set up the poorhouse, over the hill, out of sight. The labor of the people who had to be cared for in those institutions was bargained for, just as the sheriff of that day bargained the labor of his prisoners. Now, we have seen that same thing down through the years, and the Congress last year, I think, still reflected this punitive attitude on the part of a lot of people in this country toward the poor.

The board repeats its urgent request that the ADC freeze be repealed, that children of unemployed mothers as well as fathers be