

is beset with problems arising from divisions between the rich and the poor, the black and the white, beset by the problems of the ghettos and the barrios of this country. What the Ways and Means Committee and the Congress has done in adopting these provisions, which would not go further in aiding poor people but would deny aid to many desperately needy people by freezing assistance at the current levels, despite the fact that millions of people, as we have pointed out, receive no assistance at all at the present time—we try to force mothers to leave their children and accept work or training programs when there is frequently no real opportunity for them, withdrawing from them the choice about what is in the best interest of their families and putting it in the hands of the welfare departments, and adding numerous other eligibility requirements and barriers and redtape and additions to the bureaucracy that can only add to the injustice, the complexity, and the bureaucracy that make it so difficult for anybody to get the benefits that are presently available.

We think this vicious law, if it is not repealed immediately, is going to be a major contributor—I might mention that the President's Commission on Civil Disorders has already pointed out, as have many other groups and bodies, that the welfare system as it is presently operated is one of the root causes of the problems that we have in our cities and in our country, and that this welfare bill, this welfare law which is now the law of the land, can only be regarded as adding fuel to the fires in those ghettos, rather than doing anything about the causes.

So I am sad to say that this Congress has moved in the wrong direction toward trying to deal with those problems.

I hope this investigation and the initiative that has been taken by you, Mrs. Griffiths, and the others in this committee will be a step toward turning around and repealing that welfare law and toward beginning to make steps toward a guaranteed annual income for every citizen.

(The complete statement of Dr. Wiley follows:)

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. GEORGE A. WILEY

The National Welfare Rights Organization is a nation-wide organization of welfare recipients and other poor people. It was founded in August 1967 and already has a constituency of over 180 local groups in 60 cities and in 30 States. NWRO is directly and vitally concerned with the present welfare system and in income maintenance programs which may replace it in the future. We believe that the inadequacies of most government programs to aid poor people result in large part from the fact that little or no consideration is given to the views, the needs or the interests of those affected by the programs. We therefore welcome this opportunity to present the views of our constituency which have been developed over the course of the two year development of the National Welfare Rights Organization.

ADEQUATE INCOME

It is the unanimous opinion of our membership that the basic need of poor people is *money*. We believe that the way to do something about poverty is to give people the money they need to meet the basic necessities of life at least at a minimum level for health, decency and dignity. This minimum should be given uniformly by a simple procedure to all people who are in need without degrading investigators and harassments. We suggest that the absolute minimum standard should be the "low income" poverty line as defined by Mollie Orshansky of the Social Security Administration.* This level provides about \$4,400 per year for an urban family of four with a \$600 a year adjustment for additional

*See booklet on the Poverty Line, appendix 6.