

INCOME MAINTENANCE PROGRAMS

TUESDAY, JUNE 25, 1968

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISCAL POLICY OF THE
JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to recess, at 10 a.m., in room 2212, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Martha W. Griffiths (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

President: Representative Griffiths, and Representative Rumsfeld, and Senator Proxmire.

Also present: John R. Stark, executive director; James W. Knowles, director of research, and Nelson D. McClung, economic consultant.

Representative GRIFFITHS. The subcommittee will come to order, please, and we will begin again the hearings on income maintenance programs.

Mr. Hazlitt, would you care to start with your testimony, please?

STATEMENT OF HENRY HAZLITT, NEW YORK CITY, FORMERLY CONTRIBUTING EDITOR, NEWSWEEK

Mr. HAZLITT. Yes, Madam Chairman.

I am Henry Hazlitt. I am the author of a dozen books, mainly on economics, and at present write a weekly column, syndicated internationally by the Los Angeles Times Syndicate. For the 20 years 1946 to 1966 I wrote a weekly signed column on economic questions for Newsweek magazine. For the 12 years prior to that I wrote most of the editorials on economic questions for the New York Times.

I wish to testify now on the proposals for various forms of a guaranteed annual income, including the proposal for a so-called "negative income tax."

The guaranteed income proposal in its most uncompromising form has been put forward by Mr. Robert Theobald. He "would guarantee to every citizens of the United States . . . the right to an income from the Federal Government to enable him to live with dignity." Everybody would be guaranteed this income, regardless of whether or not he worked, could work, or was willing to work. As Mr. Theobald has put it, having this income handed to him, would be an "absolute constitutional right," not to be withdrawn "under any circumstances."

The recipients, in other words, as I understand it, could continue to get this guaranteed income not only if they resolutely refused to seek or take a job, but if they gambled the money away at bingo or at the races, or spent it on prostitutes, pornography, whisky, gin, marihuana, heroin, or whatnot. They would be given "sufficient to