

I must point out that we now have almost a million persons who are on social security and at the same time have to go to public welfare departments to obtain additional relief, since the assistance provided by one system of the government is simply not enough to permit us to live. Why we need two bureaucracies, and two systems to provide support to the aged is really beyond my comprehension.

Third: An expanded and improved system for raising to an adequate income level those persons not in the labor force or those whose work experience is so insubstantial as not to enable them to qualify for adequate social insurance benefits.

I might say that on the question of the specific program, there was a substantial difference of opinion in our membership with respect to the negative income tax or the family allowance approach. The association has not taken a position in support of one program or another. In part, we are caught in the same dilemma as the committee is caught. We recognize some of the limitations of both programs.

Yet we are convinced that the present procedures—the use of a means test, the use of public welfare departments to provide income support and the situation where each of the States sets its own level—simply cannot go on. We see it as destructive not only of individuals involved but to society as a whole. However, we suggest there is a need now, before we finally settle on one program or another, to reform and reorganize the public assistance program so that no person's income will fall below a minimum standard of adequacy.

We would suggest again the elimination of residence requirements, relative responsibility except spouse for spouse and parent for children, and the categories of assistance. We suggest that such a public assistance program could be administered in a way that protects the individual's dignity, privacy, and constitutional rights.

We suggest that much can be done today to improve our present system while we gear up for a new program, whether it be a program of negative income tax or a program of family allowance.

Finally, I would like to point out that there is an enormous cost to our society of a permanent poverty-stricken segment of our population. The cost is not only economic. The cost, which can be called a social cost, is not only the degradation and alienation of millions of citizens and the violence and destruction that inevitably results from hopelessness amidst affluence. It also includes the wasted lives, the loss of productive and contributing taxpayers and consumers, the new, yet unborn generations of alienated youth and the possible loss of the most fundamental objectives of our American society.

There are enormous social consequences to inaction on the matter of income maintenance. I would submit that there are equally positive social consequences to action now to give to all Americans income support and income opportunity.

Our members for the past several years, throughout the country, have been publishing articles and doing some fundamental studies, evaluating various proposals for the various programs for guaranteed annual income. I would be most willing, Madam Chairman, to submit these articles as well as the full text of my testimony to your committee.

(The remainder of the prepared statement of Dr. Thursz follows:)