

## THE HARD FACTS ABOUT IMPENDING OEO LEGISLATION

The House Education and Labor Committee has just released a bill to refund the Office of Economic Opportunity this fiscal year and the next fiscal year. The administrative bill which went before the Committee appropriated approximately \$2-billion for the anti-poverty program. The House Committee tacked on the following amendments:

1. COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES MUST MAKE 1/2 OF THEIR LOCAL SHARE CASH ALLOTMENT.
2. ALL COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES WILL LOSE LOCAL AUTONOMY AS WE KNOW IT. State or local governments must be the official agencies through which anti-poverty funds will be distributed. If the mayor and other elected city officials disapprove of existing CAA establishments, they have an option to set up a new agency, propose a program, and have the new agency recognized as the legitimate community action agency.
  - a. elected officials or their representatives would hold 1/3 of the board seats;
  - b. community leaders of private organizations would hold 1/3 of the board seats;
  - c. representatives of the poor, chosen by democratic process, would fill the remaining 1/3 seats.
3. OEO-FUNDED ORGANIZATIONS WILL BE PROHIBITED FROM USING WORKERS OR FUNDS IN VOTER REGISTRATION.

OEO is currently operating on a \$1.6-billion budget. The House Appropriations Committee has voted to cut this current budget by \$400-million.

According to OEO statements in the past, if this cut were passed and made retroactive to July 1, OEO would have to do the following:

1. CLOSE 60 OF THE 123 EXISTING JOB CORPS CENTERS AND DISMISS 20,000 ENROLLEES.
2. CUT NEIGHBORHOOD YOUTH CENTERS BY 250,000 ENROLLEES.
3. DROP 120,000 ADULTS FROM JOB TRAINING.
4. DROP 92,000 CHILDREN FROM YEAR-ROUND HEAD START CLASSES.
5. CUT OFF 300,000 POOR PERSONS FROM LEGAL SERVICES.
6. END ALL SUMMER PROGRAMS SCHEDULED FOR THE COMING YEAR.
7. GENERALLY CUT CAP PROGRAMS BY 40%.

During the week of November 7, the debate on the floor of the House will probably begin on the OEO bill. THIS DEBATE IS ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL BECAUSE THE DIRECTION OF THE WHOLE POVERTY EFFORT DEPENDS ON WHAT COMES OUT OF THIS HOUSE VOTE.

The OEO bill will then go to a Conference Committee of House and Senate representatives, who will work out a compromise version of the bill.