

Steering Committee Co-chairmen: Andrew Heiskell / A. Philip Randolph

March 1, 1968

NATIONAL COORDINATOR'S WEEKLY REPORT

LEGISLATION

During the week Senators Javits (R-NY) and Yarborough (D-Tex) introduced a bill (S3013) to provide \$150 million for summer jobs and anti-poverty programs. They were joined by 19 co-sponsors from both parties. The bill was referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee, which held hearings on Wednesday. Sponsors of the measure hope for early action.

Attached is a fact sheet dealing with the need for a supplemental appropriation for the Office of Economic Opportunity and special summer jobs, education, and recreation programs.

LOCAL COALITIONS

Niagara Falls, New York, held an urban coalition organizational meeting this week. Associate National Coordinator Elbert Ransom, Jr., addressed the meeting to explain the national program and review programs and activities of other local coalitions. The participants, representative of all segments of the community, pledged support to the new organization. Task forces were established in six areas--housing, education, recreation, job training, job development and communications and public support--and an executive director was named. The executive, Lester Niesz, is a retired consultant to the Carborundum Company and is serving as an unpaid volunteer. Two other people offered their assistance as volunteer staff members, the Hotel Niagara agreed to donate office space, and a local furniture store is lending office equipment.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC SUPPORT

Public Relations Directors of organizations represented on the Steering Committee are urged to attend a meeting arranged especially for them in the Time-Life Building in New York City, Friday, March 8. Invitations giving the time and other details of the meeting have been sent to the individuals. John W. Gardner, new executive head of the Urban Coalition, is scheduled to meet with the group.

With regard to the second Administration decision, America's fifty largest cities have already received, in the aggregate, \$1.5 million in planning grants for constructive summer programs. Comments by representatives of local government and community agencies at the recent national conference held by the President's Council on Youth Opportunity clearly indicated that cut-backs in available federal assistance are already aggravating community frustrations and tensions.

In summary, community leaders in the country's largest cities are now faced with the dual problem of dollar cut-backs in existing working programs and the financial inability to meet summer unrest with soundly planned and thought out courses of action.

It is apparent that the federal funds now available are inadequate to meet even minimal program needs in employment, education and recreation, if urban areas are to avoid serious discontent and disturbances this summer. The supplemental appropriation proposed below would substantially meet known program needs if enacted soon enough to be put to work before the summer commences.

The Proposal

To meet the basic needs requires a supplemental appropriation combining the amount of last year's supplemental appropriation (\$75 million) with a level of financial commitment based on the most recent needs assessment for poverty programs.

An appropriate measure would acknowledge the reasonableness of the Administration's fiscal '68 budget request for poverty programs, restore NAB diverted funds to about-to-be-cut programs, and make use of already expended planning dollars to improve the special programs of last year.

Such a proposal would include:

1. \$104 million to upgrade the current OEO appropriation to the requested authorization level for fiscal '68 (pro-rated for the remainder of the fiscal year);
2. \$100 million to replace funds diverted to the NAB program;
3. The \$75 million special summer supplemental for a total supplementary appropriation of \$279 million.

This amount would ostensibly give OEO sufficient dollars to meet on-going program needs and meet the minimum commitment of last year's summer programs.