

# THE URBAN COALITION ACTION COUNCIL

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## WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Housing. Final action on appropriations for the HUD Department was taken September 25 when the Senate agreed to the disappointingly low figures for key housing programs without dissent. (For figures, see September 20 Legislative Report.)

HUD Under Secretary Robert C. Wood September 25 said decisions would be made within a week on whether to make across-the-board reductions or selective cuts in HUD programs. Congress cut the Department's requested funds by one-third -- from \$3.1 billion to \$2.1 billion.

Wood, in an interview with editors of Housing and Urban Affairs Daily, singled out four programs where the Congressional cuts especially hurt. These were:

Urban renewal grants. As these are for the next fiscal year, fiscal 1970, more funds may be sought next year.

Model Cities, for which \$625 million instead of \$1 billion was approved.

Urban information and technical assistance -- a small program to help states and cities carry out urban projects. Congress refused to grant any of the \$5 million requested for the program.

Fair housing enforcement, for which all funds were denied on grounds HUD already had sufficient personnel working in the civil rights field. The \$9 million the Senate had provided would have enabled HUD to hire about 690 investigators across the country to enforce the new fair housing requirements written into law in April.

Several organizations have protested the denial of funds to enforce the fair housing act and there is a possibility that HUD will ask Congress to reconsider its action. This hinges, however, on a decision the Administration must make soon on whether to send requests for supplemental appropri-



ations to Congress this fall. Although that is the usual procedure late in the session, the economy mood in Congress may be so strong just before elections that the Administration will not ask for additional money.

The major new programs in the 1968 housing law will be delayed at least six months if no supplemental appropriations are requested from or voted by Congress.

HUD Personnel. Another factor that might delay the new housing programs is the Congressional directive in June that HUD, and all other federal agencies, cut back on their personnel. HUD had hoped to add 1,600 employees this year. Instead, it will have to reduce its staff by 900 -- not by firing employees but by filling only 7 out of 10 vacancies that develop as employees resign or retire.

Senator John Sparkman (D Ala.), chairman of the Senate's Housing Subcommittee, tried unsuccessfully September 23 to win Senate approval of an exemption for HUD from the personnel cutback. Unfortunately, exemptions for other agencies were tacked onto Sparkman's amendment and the major sponsor of the personnel cutback, Senator John Williams (R Del.), fought the amendment bitterly. It was defeated, 23-37.

It is anticipated that another attempt will be made to exempt HUD from the severe personnel limitations before Congress adjourns.

Education, Labor and Antipoverty Funds. Final appropriations for education, manpower training and antipoverty programs will be announced September 30. Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees compromised their differences in a September 26 meeting but withheld announcement of the sums agreed upon. The differences in key appropriations were listed in Appendix B of the September 13 Legislative Report.

Head Start. Members of the House and Senate education committees, meeting in conference on the vocational education bill, have agreed to drop an amendment by Senator Peter Dominick (R Colo.) that would have transferred the Head Start program to HEW's Office of Education. The program will continue to be run by the independent antipoverty agency, the Office of Economic Opportunity. Under the final version of the vocational education bill, the President is asked to have a study made of how Head Start can best be administered and to report to Congress next spring.