

STATEMENT OF SARGENT SHRIVER
SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT

BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND PUBLIC WELFARE
UNITED STATES SENATE

June 17, 1964

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Three months ago today, the Committee on Education and Labor of the House of Representatives opened hearings on President Johnson's proposed Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.

Businessmen and labor leaders, educators and social workers, civil rights leaders, and elected officials of State and local governments had all helped to decide what should be done this year to attack the roots of poverty. They agreed that the programs in the Economic Opportunity Act are needed.

Five Cabinet members and their staffs helped to plan how much could be done this first year, and how these programs should be administered. They agree that the proposals in the Economic Opportunity Act are the most economical way to achieve hard-headed and practical goals.

The House Committee has now reported out the Economic Opportunity Act after hearing more than a hundred witnesses. After detailed study, the Committee has made a number of changes and amendments which, taken together, substantially strengthen the legislation.

Today I am pleased to be here to try to answer your questions. But I would like to begin by making several brief points on the program and its administration.

First, this is a prudent program. It does not require one cent not already included in the President's budget presented last January.

Second, it is a focused program. For the first time in our national history, we are proposing to undertake a major national effort focused exclusively on poor people. Furthermore, the administration of this program is focused in a single Director.

Third, it is a practicable program. It is not a program of Federal handouts to alleviate poverty temporarily. It is aid to help those who are willing to help themselves get out of poverty by building up their skills, increasing their employability, raising their earning power, and renewing the communities where they now live. This program seeks permanent solutions by applying techniques which have already worked where they have been tried.

Fourth, it is a feasible program. We propose to do this first year only so much as we are sure we can carry out efficiently, with a dollar's value for a dollar spent. At the same time, we will scrutinize the results, so that we can stop any unproductive efforts and propose any needed improvements.

Fifth, it is an American program. It relies on local efforts and leadership, and the volunteer spirit of the individual. No one will be forced into the Job Corps because the only way to get in is to volunteer. Federal planning will not be forced on any community, because we are counting on communities to take the initiative in deciding what needs to be done.

And last, it is an economical program. The most expensive thing we can do in the War on Poverty is to do nothing. Welfare and the prosecution and prevention of crime cost us billions every year. Helping people to pull themselves out of poverty, on the other hand, will add new taxpayers to the rolls.

I am convinced, the President is convinced, and a large majority of elected officials, State, local, and national, are convinced that we, as a Nation, have the capacity, the resources, the technology, and the will to eliminate grinding poverty in our country. I urge that you act speedily to report out, favorably, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, so that we can open a major new offensive in the War on Poverty.

Thank you.

BUDGET SUMMARY
 WAR ON POVERTY
 Fiscal Year 1965
 (Thousands of Dollars)

Title I	Youth Programs	\$412,500
A.	Youth Camps and Guidance Centers	\$190,000
B.	Work-Training Programs	150,000
C.	Work-Study Programs	72,500
Title II	Urban and Rural Community Action Programs	\$340,000
A.	General Community Action Programs	\$315,000
B.	Adult Basic Education Programs	25,000
Title III		
A.	Special Programs to Combat Poverty in Rural Areas	\$ 50,000
B.	Special Programs for Migrant Workers	*
Title IV	Employment and Investment Incentives	**
Title V	Work-Experience Programs	\$150,000
Title VI	Administration, Research and Volunteers	\$ 10,000
Total Authorization Request - Fiscal Year 1965		\$962,500

* Utilizes up to \$15 million from other authorizations.

** Utilizes existing Small Business Administration funding authority.