

Community Action Agencies

To Continue Under HEW

The House of Representatives, on May 29, approved legislation to continue Community Action Agencies such as RurAL CAP through a new agency in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

The overwhelming vote of 331 to 53 surprised most experts in Washington and could very well cause President Nixon to re-evaluate his stated opposition to OEO/Community Action-type programs.

The new legislation, as proposed by the House, is entitled the "Community Services Act of 1974" (HR 14449) and would take the place of the Office of Economic Opportunity Programs that have been in existence since 1964.

Mike Harper, Executive Director of RurAL CAP, said that President Nixon wanted to kill OEO and has already essentially killed the OEO in name. However, the programs such as RurAL CAP, Head Start, and Community Enterprise Development groups will survive.

Harper reported that having Community Action Agencies administered out of the huge bureaucracy of HEW is not his idea of responsive government; however, "We are glad that the House did take this step and feel that we can live with the legislation as passed in the House."

must consider legislation on behalf of OEO and it is reported that Senators Javitts and Kennedy will soon co-sponsor legislation supporting an independent agency for OEO rather than moving the program into HEW.

At the same time that the much-belabored Community Action Agency Program was coming to a vote in the House, the legislation creating an independent Legal Services Corporation was about to clear the last hurdle in the legislative process.

It is reported that the reason for the sudden strong support throughout the Congress has been because of surprising approval of the program by Governors and Mayors throughout the country. Governor William A. Egan wrote a strong supporting letter for RurAL CAP earlier this spring and had much to do with the attitude of Congressmen.