

# SUITS FILED TO STOP OEO DISMANTLEMENT

## Suits Seek to Compel Administration To Submit New Plan

Several suits have been filed to try to stop the dismantlement of the Office of Economic Opportunity, and a hearing has been scheduled in Washington, D.C. for March 22, 1973.

The major point in the suits seeks to compel the administration to submit a formal reorganization plan to Congress May 1.

Another issue raised is that Howard Phillips, Acting Director of OEO, is serving illegally, since his nomination has not been submitted to the Senate for confirmation.

Also, the plaintiffs OEO national union employees, some CAAs and individual poor persons say the OEO Act authorizes continuation of most OEO programs through fiscal 1975.

They contend that the President's elimination of OEO is a violation of Congressional intent that the programs and the agency should continue.

The administration says that the authority for the programs will remain intact there will be no funding to continue the agency and community action programs.

U.S. District Court Judge William Jones denied a temporary restraining order against Phillips, and said that he was virtually powerless to stop the Administration from carrying out its objectives. Although Judge Jones did not discuss the merits of the complaints, he commented that the court cannot compel the executive branch to carry out a program that has not been funded.

The 1974 Fiscal Year budget proposes no funding for OEO and CAPs.

The court battle to save OEO will be expensive, according to organizers of the lawsuits. An estimated \$40,000 to \$75,000 will be needed for legal fees and research.

OEO backers are requesting that donations to finance the legal battle be sent to: OEO

Legal Defense, 1828 L St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

The foregoing information was taken from the ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY REPORT, an independent weekly which gives news of OEO programs.

Rural CAP has joined this effort by supplying information that explains some of the benefits to low income people that have been provided through OEO.

Mike Harper, Executive Director of the anti-poverty agency, commented that, "We must continue to fulfill our mission, to advocate for the poor and disadvantaged."