INTERVIEW II

DATE: September 28, 1981

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PLACE: The Cosmos Club, Washington, D. C.

Tape 1 of 2

G: There is an indication that preschool education was discussed in the task force. Why didn't it appear in the legislation that went up?

W: Well, there were a lot of different problems that were discussed during the task force, but because of the extremely limited time that was involved in putting together the program initially it was generally thought that a lot of things like preschool education and so on would have different applications in different areas and they would all sort of get swept under the rug of Community Action. There were all sorts of things that were brought up: adult literacy, for example, which is a problem in some areas, but not a particular problem in some other areas. So that one of the initial theses is, well, all these kinds of specific problems that people are throwing at us that are basically going to have to be solved at the community level will all get swept under the rug of Community Action, and we'll pick them all up in there someway.

Now what happened with Head Start was an indication, again, of Sargent Shriver's really personal touch with the program, because

the concept that enrolling children from disadvantaged households in nursery schools or kindergarten schools before they got to first grade so that they could become exposed to books and so that they could enter the first grade you might say from the same starting line as children from more advantaged families suddenly became a very, very persuasive one to Shriver personally. And because it was persuasive to Shriver personally, and because a rather dynamic leader, Julius Richmond, emerged to take charge of the program both professionally and administratively, Head Start blossomed within Community Action really as a completely separate program element. But it did that because Shriver saw this as something with nearly universal appeal.

In a sense, Shriver was very much tuned into things that he felt would have a very, very broad and strong appeal and broad salability in Congress and in the American public in a variety of different ways, and Head Start quickly had all those attributes. Head Start kids of course don't riot in Job Corps camps, and Head Start started to emerge just as some of the riots of the Job Corps centers were occurring. It's hard to be against a poor three or four-year old getting exposed to a book for the first time before he gets into first grade. It's the kind of a thing which many, many people will be very, very much in favor of regardless of their political coloration. It was the epitome of trying to break the cycle of poverty. One of the original theses about poverty, which I

think is still correct, is that most poor adults were children in poor families.

G: It's cyclical.

W: And therefore there's a cyclical element to it. People don't sink into poverty, they're born into poverty and stay there because they're born into it in almost all cases, and the idea that in Head Start you could get a child before he got into first grade--and there were all sorts of stories, you know, the fact that 75 per cent of the children from poor families by the time they got into the first grade had never even seen a book, had no idea what a lot of the elements of education were and therefore they simply weren't ready to compete with children from more affluent households, and that it had all the kind of sex appeal of Raquel Welch at a geriatric convention.

G: When did you first perceive the acceptance of Head Start? I mean, there must have been a point at which it gained widespread support. Was it with Shriver himself, or was there a time before this when--?

W: Well, it was a combination of factors. First it was because Shriver himself supported it and second because there were literally thousands of organizations in all kinds of different areas of the country that were ready to step forward and operate Head Start centers. Therefore that was another part of what you might call the naturalness of Head Start right from the beginning, was that you could involve all sorts of small-scale private organizations, volunteer organizations and so on throughout. Really Head Start took off

very, very rapidly and with a tremendous expansion right from the beginning. Then after that there were a series of programs like Foster Grandparents and so on, all of which in some kind of way tried to emulate Head Start or were, you might say, sons of Head Start, but none of which had the success. Sequels never have the success of the original.

G: Yes. There was an indication that I think Robert Cooke, a specialist in early childhood education, brought some of this significance to Shriver's attention. Do you recall this?

W: I honestly don't because at this point in time, as I recall, this was after the legislation had passed and when the whole OEO program was going into operation and we had about a million management and administrative and budget problems and I was really not very directly involved in the setting up of Head Start. I was very much aware of what was going on, but I really was not deeply involved in the specifics of what was going at that time.

G: During the task force period do you recall to what extent Head Start was discussed by the task force members, or a dimension of pre-school education? I won't say Head Start.

W: Certainly preschool education as one item that would naturally be involved in most Community Action Programs was assumed and was certainly one of the things that Dick Boone and Jack Conway and the other people who were involved with Community Action, it was assumed that this would be a component of most programs, probably one of the most important components. But it was never originally looked

at as simply one of the most important components and that that point in time at least at the level I was working on, we were still working on the assumption that the initiative of determining what programs would be operating where would be determined largely at the local area. We weren't really very much concerned at that point in time with the problem of, for example, developing an early childhood program or a Head Start program at a national level. The thesis was that if the program was to be selected at the local level that they would select there the program that best met the needs at the local level, given the fact that in the mid-sixties there was long experience in early childhood education and there were universities in almost every area and colleges that had experience in this area and that their expertise would be brought to bear at the local level rather than through the national organization.

G: There was a pilot program that the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency was running in West Virginia, I think, called Even Start, or the term was alluded to that this would give poor children an even start rather than a head start. Do you recall that program and whether or not the task force members had any familiarity with it?

W: No, I frankly do not.

G: Okay. Did HEW want to administer the War on Poverty programs dealing with education?

W: That's a difficult question to answer because in a sense, of course, the Office of Education and Frank Keppel, who was the head of the Office of Education during a substantial part of this time, were

very much interested in what was going on, but on the other hand, the Office of Education tended to be so tied to working solely through state education agencies they had a very, very specific format. They either gave grants to state education agencies or they gave grants to universities to develop demonstration projects or research projects of one sort or another, and they were simply not set up administratively or from a management format to deal with a completely different way of handing out grants. While, therefore, there was an urge to become involved from the point of view of program development and policy and philosophy of education, I think there was a recognition right from the beginning that they were really not set up to deal with the kind of program that OEO was going in the direction of.

G: Later on, of course, they did try to get Head Start delegated to [HEW].

W: That's right.

G: And succeeded.

W: That's right.

G: Do you recall how the adult education program was added to the legislation and the circumstances of that?

W: I really was not involved in that area. By the time that came along, that again was a completely separate area. It came along somewhat later.

G: Now, the Work-Study Program was administered by HEW but had a general coordination function by the OEO director.

W: That's correct.

G: Do you recall this arrangement and how it evolved and how well it worked?

W: Yes. Basically, from a management point of view, as OEO was being set up after the legislation was passed and the first appropriations were received, there were heads of the major programs which were operated directly: the Job Corps, Community Action, VISTA. Then there was a director of delegated programs who had, you might say, the third rank in OEO, that is there was a director of OEO, there was Shriver, there was a deputy director position--for a while that was thought to be Jack Conway and then after that I think it was Bernie Boutin and after that it was Bert Harding--and then the third level was a series of deputy directors, one of the primary of which was the deputy director for delegated programs.

G: Who was that?

W: I'm trying to remember his name now. He was legislative assistant to one of the--I think to Senator [Pat] McNamara.

G: Perrin? Was it Bob Perrin?

W: Yes. Bob Perrin. Bob Perrin. And following him, it was a very talented black fellow from an education background.

G: Was it Lisle Carter?

W: Lisle Carter. Lisle Carter. Exactly. Both of whom were good and pretty skilled people in a pretty difficult role, the role being one of trying to negotiate with other agencies controls on these programs which often the other agencies were not very willing to

accept, the Neighborhood Youth Corps and the Work-Study Program being really the two biggest of those programs. There was a small program run through the Farmers Home Administration that simply didn't get the same attention because it was a different program and a relatively small one. The Neighborhood Youth Corps absorbed the majority of time and attention because it was the largest of all the programs. The Work-Study Program [absorbed] a little bit less attention, but most of the attention there was really devoted to setting up what are called straight administrative management reporting procedures and so on rather than major policy questions.

G: In either case did OEO have the necessary clout to enforce its directives?

W: Depended on the agency, really. In the question of the Neighborhood Youth Corps, that was a continuing wrestling match simply because of the character of OEO and Sargent Shriver, and the character of the Labor Department of Willard Wirtz. And the question of who was in charge and who would go how far in determining what the specific operating requirements were, and in another area, the question of the OEO inspector general's right to go out and drop in unannounced on Neighborhood Youth Corps projects and write critical reports of them and then what would happen in response to those critical reports was really a continuing wrestling match.

The Work-Study Program really didn't involve any of these kinds of questions. It was a very, very simple kind of program to operate. It didn't raise lots of policy questions. When you come right down

to it, the Work-Study Program wasn't really a poverty program, it was a kind of something the Office of Education had wanted to get passed for several years and we sort of slipped it in underneath the umbrella of OEO, but really didn't have much relationship to the rest of the program. There weren't very many people from poverty families literally who were going to college and who would qualify and wanted to apply for the Work-Study Program, therefore the income requirements, the income limits, were much higher and it was a much simpler program to operate across the board.

G: Let me ask you about VISTA. Did the Peace Corps during the task force period fear a competition from VISTA and oppose it at all, do you recall?

W: I don't think that there was any indication ever that the Peace Corps was afraid of VISTA or that it was concerned that VISTA comprised competition, except perhaps in the sense that both agencies might be going out and competing for the same volunteers to some extent which would be inevitable. Therefore there was some thought that they should have some kind of coordinated recruiting techniques. But as to the question of whether the VISTA would replace the Peace Corps, or the Peace Corps would somehow get wrapped up in VISTA programs, subsumed in the VISTA program, at the time that VISTA started to operate--that was in 1965, 1966 and 1967--relationships between the two agencies were almost nonexistent except in the recruiting area. And neither one, I think, was really concerned or foresaw in any real way what happened during the early seventies,

which was that their programs got all wrapped up together in one big kind of volunteer agency, along with a couple of other programs.

G: Was the Peace Corps the basis for VISTA? Did they see it as a domestic Peace Corps?

W: Oh, yes. Yes. As a matter of fact, one of the ideas at the beginning was that it would be called the Domestic Peace Corps. The whole pattern--the Peace Corps task force contained a number of people who were Peace Corps graduates or Peace Corps alumni of one sort or another. Glenn Ferguson, the first director, was a Peace Corps staff member in Bangkok in one of the first programs in Thailand. And the advice and the contributions from the Peace Corps in terms of things like selection tests, training techniques, training programs, which universities, how to write contracts for training with universities, and so on, that kind of cooperation was very, very close and it was patterned right after the Peace Corps, right down to project selection--you know, what kind of projects should be selected, how you set up a project, how you set up a useful space for a volunteer to occupy for a period of a year or a year and a half.

G: It seems like the Peace Corps had been involved in community organization work abroad and enabling villagers to solve their own problems and this sort of thing in remote areas.

W: The Peace Corps projects were divided up into a number of different kinds of criteria: vocational education, entomology and insect control, agriculture and so on. One of the largest sectors was one called community development, which basically involved sending people

out to villages in more or less rural areas and trying to find out what the particular needs, the highest priority needs were in a particular village, and trying to find some way of dealing with that need, whatever that need might have been.

G: And was VISTA regarded as the same sort of thing?

W: Very much so. Very much so. Except of course many more VISTA volunteers were operating in heavily urban environments, a completely different environment. The sense of the problems that were involved was much, much different.

G: Was VISTA initially conceived as more of a rural program for Appalachia, for the Indian reservations, or was it seen as both a rural and an urban program when it was discussed in the task force?

W: There was a lot of ambivalence about whether it made any sense whatsoever to send VISTA volunteers into cities to deal with I guess what you call urban development projects of one sort or another, because in part the rationale for many Peace Corps projects, i.e., "Here is a small village in the Altiplano of Bolivia which has no contact with the outside world and which has a lot of problems, let's send a few Peace Corps volunteers in and see whether they can help do something." That kind of concept doesn't have any relevance to Harlem, New York where you obviously have an awful lot of people around there, there's no shortage of people, there's no shortage of trained people.

One of the things that was tried a great deal was to try to integrate Peace Corps [VISTA] volunteers with Head Start projects,

with Community Action projects, the idea that the VISTA volunteers could be directly involved in many Community Action agencies and perform roles there. I must say that from my point of view the success of the VISTA volunteers in major urban programs always kind of got hung up on the fact that the people who lived, for example, in an urban ghetto were much, much less receptive to some college graduate from white suburbia coming into Harlem to run a nursery education program than a Bolivian farmer might be to the same kind of individual going to live in a village in Bolivia. In fact, they are two dramatically different situations, even though ostensibly in the exterior--you know a person is going in to try to carry out some kind of community development activity, but when you look at the realities they're so different that it's hard to call them the same thing.

G: Was this dichotomy discussed in the task force?

W: Well, I think it was kicked around in the task force, but it was perfectly obvious that VISTA volunteers were going to have to be assigned to cities as well as rural areas, and it couldn't be simply a rural program. And a lot of efforts were made simply to try to make an urban VISTA volunteer program work. I think it was probably one of the less successful areas.

G: Well, one of the controversies surrounding the urban VISTAs was the whole issue of whether or not they should be involved in community organization as opposed to casework, and I wonder what the task force intended on this matter?

W: It's hard for me to recall, sitting back and recalling back fifteen years. Part of the situation with the VISTA program was that it was a relatively small program compared to Community Action and the Job Corps, and the issues that floated up from the VISTA program simply never got the kind of attention, the kind of senior management attention from Shriver and others that let's say Head Start did or some of the other programs did. It was not financially a large program, and therefore questions like "should VISTA volunteers be involved in political action groups at the local level," I'm sure these issues were raised, but they simply never made it to the top of the agenda, at least in my experience.

G: I notice from the hearings that there was a variation in the name, that it started out as Volunteers for America, or Volunters in America or something, then they added the "in Service" to America.

W: Well, we started off with about a half a dozen different suggestions for a name for the program, and I think we did settle at one point in time when we made the congressional presentation on Volunteers for America and then we got a cry from an agency that claimed it had already had this name, and we also found out that I think it was an anti-alcoholism program--

G: Picked up old clothes.

W: --and that we all decided that we better change it to something else right away. (Laughter)

G: Well, now, the whole VISTA concept, the national service corps, had been up before and it had been defeated.

W: That's right.

G: I think it was a pet of Hubert Humphrey. Did Shriver shy away from this because it was deemed a liability?

W: No, I don't think Shriver ever shied away from it. Again, several components of the OEO legislation, which was an omnibus piece of legislation, were ideas that had been presented previously to Congress specifically in the form of pieces of legislation. The Peace Corps had precedents, in fact, before it was passed in 1961. The idea of a National Youth Corps had been proposed by Hubert Humphrey I think in the early fifties. The Job Corps was similar to some activities that had been proposed previously on a much smaller scale so that I never saw any sense that Shriver shied away from putting things together that seemed to make a package that had some appeal. Let's say that I don't think that the VISTA program ever generated the kind of appeal or the kind of enthusiasm that the Peace Corps program did.

G: Sure. Did the task force ever consider the impact that the VISTA experience would have on the volunteers themselves as well as the communities?

W: Oh, yes. I remember when I was working on the Peace Corps task force and we were reviewing the Peace Corps legislation, I was going over it with Bill Josephson, who was then Shriver's lawyer who was working on the Peace Corps legislation, and I remember we had to write a--I said, "We need a preamble for this, because every legislation has a kind of a broad statement of purpose at the front

end that suggests what this legislation is all about." And the thought in the Peace Corps, of course, was that the Peace Corps would be carried out first to improve foreign relations, second, to help underdeveloped countries develop themselves, and third, to develop a better understanding in Americans of other countries and to develop a better understanding among other peoples of Americans.

One of the thoughts in VISTA, of course, was that there would be a benefit in taking college graduates and some technically qualified people and giving them assignments which would give them experience they otherwise probably would not have, working on an Indian reservation or working in a poor Appalachian community, or working in an urban ghetto area, and that this kind of cross-fertilization between different areas of the country, different parts of the country, not only in terms of geography but in terms of rural-urban and the types of social areas of the country that we have, was a major benefit, and that understanding the patchwork quilt nature of the country and what goes on inside of some of the other pieces of the quilt that we live in is important for all Americans in exactly the same way that it's important for Americans to understand Bolivians and Ethiopians and Pakistanis better.

G: Let me ask you some questions about the legislative submission in 1964, first of all. Were there congressmen and senators who privately expressed doubts about the Economic Opportunity Act, who did not do so publicly?

W: Well, I would say there were definitely, particularly on the congressional side, congressmen who expressed very, very severe reservations about certain aspects of the program which represented positions that they would not take publicly.

G: Oh, really?

W: I remember at one point in time--this would have been in roughly July of 1964--when it was well understood that Wilbur Mills was quite opposed to the poverty program as a whole, and we prepared a kind of a position statement to deal with a number of the questions that it was understood that he had about the program, and I was sent personally by Shriver up to Wilbur Mills' office to sit down with the congressman and go through this. The appointment was made, I went up and was ushered into the Congressman's presence, just myself and the Congressman. And I said, "You know, we've prepared this document which we think deals with some of the questions that you have about the program and tells, you know, why we think perhaps we may have taken care of your concerns or recognized your concerns in some way." He took that piece of paper and threw it across the room and said a few words about how he was not going to be involved in any program to help a bunch of niggers and threw me out of the office.

G: Is that right?

W: That was about a three or four-minute meeting, and I scurried back downtown with my tail between my legs, you might say.

On the Senate side, you had some very quiet opponents, but I think anyone would have known that they would have been opposed to the poverty bill. Lister Hill, for example, the senator from Alabama, was not what one might call a tremendously vocal opponent of the program, but he was nevertheless pretty solidly opposed to it. And that came out of deep personal conviction and representing his constituents.

G: Were there any other congressmen or senators that you talked with to influence about the program?

W: Well, I dealt with quite a number of different Republican congressmen. Naturally the divisions in the program, the opponents and proponents divided somewhat on the basis of politics, although not entirely. There were a number of Republican congressmen who tended to be in favor of the program because they came from rural areas and saw that it was going to produce some help for their constituents in some rather specific ways, and there were some Democratic congressmen who came from the South and who felt that this was a program which was against the kind of conservative political philosophy that many of them opposed. Therefore there were some reasons why some Democrats would oppose it and reasons why some Republicans would favor it.

In the House Education and Labor Committee, the most influential people were Albert Quie from Minnesota, Charles Goodell from New York--I'm talking about on the opposition side. On the proponents' side, on the House Education and Labor Committee, you really had pretty

much a straight split down the middle. That was Democrats versus Republicans, particularly since Phil Landrum, the congressman from Georgia, who was a very, very respected and powerful Democratic congressman, had been selected to introduce the bill and to be the floor manager for the bill. Therefore in the House Education and Labor Committee, since the most powerful southern congressman on the committee was for the bill and managing it, there was not going to be any Democratic opposition to it. The opposition came strictly from the Republican side. Peter Frelinghuysen, of course, was a Republican spokesman. He represents a wealthy affluent suburb in northern New Jersey and would have been voicing primarily the more or less conservative Republican standard opposition to a program like this.

G: Was Edith Green a factor on the committee?

W: Oh, yes. Edith Green was a very, very powerful factor on the committee. I would say after Phil Landrum and the committee chairman, Adam Clayton Powell, she was probably the next most powerful person on the committee, for several reasons. She comes out of an educational background, she was previously a schoolteacher herself, and therefore there were parts of the program that she felt very sincerely about. Secondly, she was a very, very capable congresswoman. She did her homework, she studied, thought, and it was very clear that when she said something, it wasn't something that had just occurred to her off the top of the head, it was something that she'd done a considerable amount of homework and analysis on. She was well prepared.

And third, she was perfectly prepared to be personally nasty if necessary in order to gain her point of view. I remember one point in time when she brought down the roof of the committee room when some Republican congressman--I can't remember who it was--had asked a relatively stupid question. It was a question that just didn't reflect very much intelligence or kind of study, and she proceeded to tear him apart. Just so much so that he just went back and was discouraged from asking any further questions. Adam Clayton Powell was soaking all this in with a big grin and after she finished, he said, "Edith," he said, "You're the only woman I know who's been going through menopause for forty years."

G: Were there any aspects of the bill that she influenced in particular that were put in in order to accommodate her?

W: Well, of course the obvious one was the Job Corps for women. Her immediate reaction when the legislation went up was "Well, are there going to be girls in these Job Corps camps in addition to men?" Well, we'd all thought about that possibility before. None of us were very anxious to establish a whole separate Job Corps for women, and some people were really completely opposed to it, because they felt that the problem was the male high school dropout and getting him a job, and a female high school dropout was a completely and totally different situation and that we should draw a line and say, "Hey, that's somebody else's problem and we can't pull them out of the communities in the same way that we're planning to send males to Job Corps centers" and so on. So there was a lot of opposition at the

staff level to the idea of a women's Job Corps, but politically once Edith Green said, "Well, there are going to be women in these Job Corps centers," it was obvious that the answer was going to be yes, there would be. In addition to that, I would say that her influence stretched rather broadly across the entire program.

Now one thing that happened in the process of getting the legislation through the House was that the staff of the House Education and Labor Committee, as compared to the Senate committee, took a very, very different position with respect to cooperating with OEO. By and large, the staffs of the House committees generally are given much, much less authority than the staffs of Senate committees. You know, congressmen, because there are four hundred and thirty-five of them, may be on two committees, and if it's a junior congressman, he has a relatively minor role even then. And the congressman himself will do a lot of the homework, a lot of the research, a lot of the analysis and so on, and will make up his own positions. On the other hand, a senator--there only being a hundred senators--may be on four or five different committees and may do a great deal of outside public speaking and so on over and above his legislative duties and therefore delegates much more authority to the staff to prepare positions on legislation.

The House Education and Labor Committee staff director was a woman named Deborah Wolfe, a black woman who I recall as I think a college professor from a college in New York. It became pretty obvious after several weeks after we sent up the congressional

presentation that she simply wasn't going to deal with the OEO staff on any basis. They simply took off in the wrong direction and we simply couldn't get any kind of feedback from her as to what direction--what any congressman was thinking or where the staff was going or anything else like that. And we had to rely on the traditional channels of communication, which was back through the congressional office of the Office of Education and the congressional office of the Department of Labor in order to get any information about where the congressional staff was going.

G: Why was this? Why do you think she refused to communicate?

W: I really don't have the answer.

G: She was a Powell [appointee], wasn't she?

W: She would have been a Powell appointee. I think that she came out of one of the universities in the city of New York. I don't know whether it was because the Congressman, some congressman, a group of congressmen said, "Don't deal with those folks down there," or whether it was a personality situation or whether it simply grew out of the fact that she wasn't given very much power and decided not to cooperate, or whether it was something that we did that led her to conclude that there wasn't much point in trying to work with us. But the working relationship at the staff level on the House side was almost nil.

G: So in any event, you had to go through the traditional channels, you said.

W: That's right. So we kept getting telephone calls from Sam Helebrand [?], who was the legislative liaison for the Office of Education. He'd been developing his contacts up on the Hill for six or eight years. And he took those folks out to lunch all the time and really did his job in developing a close working relationship. We couldn't match that, because we were newcomers. And I think we were regarded on the House side as being intruders. Very different on the Senate side; on the Senate side we had no problem dealing with the folks. Don Baker, of course, was one of the main people that we were dealing with. I think he regarded us as not being particularly well-qualified in many ways, but after all, Don Baker and the folks on the Senate side, many of them had been working on reviewing legislation and budget appropriations for Labor and Public Welfare programs for ten or fifteen years. And they did, in fact, know a heck of a lot more about that than we did.

G: But there was a communion of interests there?

W: Yes, oh yes.

G: Well, did Edith Green have an input on education aspects of the program that you recall?

W: It's hard for me to recall the specific ways in which she had, off-hand, but I do remember her imprint on the whole bill and the House write-up of the bill, and really I would say the write-up of the bill in the House Education and Labor Committee was much more--not necessarily more substantive, but the changes that were made at that committee level were much greater than the changes that were

made at the Senate level. The changes at the Senate level were often more technically correct or dealing with very specific and substantive issues. The House changes, for example, inserted immediately the formula for dividing Community Action grants among states, which was something that was gravely opposed by Jack Conway, but was basically a political decision that we would accept that. And that had a major effect on the Community Action Program as the way it was different than the way it was originally conceived.

G: Oh, really?

W: Oh, yes.

G: Can you elaborate on that?

W: Well, basically, what the House Education and Labor Committee did was insert in the poverty program the same kind of formula which was typical of most Office of Education or health or welfare programs, in which there was a formula which divided the money, or a portion of the money, among states according to certain criteria. And all the argument in HEW programs usually revolves around the criteria--what criteria are going to be used, rather than the substance of the program in many ways. Jack Conway, in particular, felt very strongly that to insert an apportionment formula among the states in Community Action removed from his control and from Shriver's control the basic decision-making authority, which was the authority as to whether a certain area was going to get money or whether it wasn't going to get money. The thought was that if a state is apportioned according to the formula--let's say, five

million dollars--that Jack Conway's decision-making responsibility was only how was the five million dollars going to be spent within the state. You know, maybe he could decide that so much was going to go to Birmingham, Alabama versus Montgomery, Alabama but that wasn't the kind of decision which he wanted. He wanted to decide between Birmingham, Alabama and Chicago, Illinois. Of course, there were provisions for reapportionments of unused funds, but that was a very, very major change that was inserted by the House Committee over Jack Conway's dead body.

G: The opponents at the time argued that there would be nothing to prevent Conway from spending all two hundred million in Cleveland or New York or something like that.

W: That's right. That's right. And I remember we were preparing legislative positions about how Congress always had control and that if any program director did anything like that, that the implications for what would happen to him next year would obviously be as--what we were arguing would be as controlling as any formula that Congress might establish.

G: That was not persuasive, I gather.

W: Absolutely not. Absolutely not. I remember when I first came back, after I saw the first House committee mark-up of the bill, that was the biggest change that they had made of a great many changes in the [bill]. I told Jack Conway that he was in the House bill though it was a state apportionment formula and that was the number-one issue in the whole mark-up.

G: Do you think in retrospect that that was a mistake?

W: I think in retrospect it really was not a major issue at all, that the position that we took that any reasonable and responsible program administrator who had a sense of political astuteness would tend to divide the Community Action funds up in some reasonable way among the states so that no state would be shortchanged is very forceful. If anything it might possibly have helped a little bit, because without a formula, it would have been possible for any state to have come up with its own way of determining what it should have gotten versus what it got, did get in effect, and if [it] claimed that it was being shortchanged, then it provided a benchmark or a ruler against which one could say what was equitable and what was not. And, too, the idea that such a benchmark was available I think may have been a help in the final analysis.

G: Of course, did this contribute to the tendency to spread the program too thinly over many areas rather than focusing on the number of experimentation projects?

W: Well, the effect of any apportionment formula is to spread funds evenly across a large number of districts, and this is built into the legislative process for almost all governmental programs. I think most legislation that goes to Congress that involves giving out grants or loans or looking at the distribution of funds, there's a natural tendency in Congress to--I guess what I would call de-target funds. In the last five or six years, one of the major issues in congressional appropriations has been so-called "targeting", the

extent to which anti-poverty funds or anti-recession funds or urban redevelopment funds would be specifically targeted to the cities that were worst off, hence the inevitable tendency of Congress to spread the funds broadly across the cities rather than to work on a more strictly targeted basis. It's a natural tendency because of the necessity to generate a specific number of votes, and congressmen tend not to vote for programs that are not going to shunt money into their districts.

G: Do you think that many congressmen and senators supported the program because they realized that Shriver would be the head of it? Was there a personal dimension here in the. . . .

W: There was a very strong appeal on the part of many congressmen in particular to vote for the program or to support the program because Shriver was involved, and it went back to something that Shriver did in the Peace Corps, which I understand it was unique. In the first few months of the Peace Corps, when the Peace Corps was being organized and was being presented to Congress, it's my understanding--and I'm pretty sure this is correct--that Shriver met personally one by one with every single congressman and every single senator. And when you realize that means five hundred and thirty-five meetings, that is a huge task to undertake. If you assume four meetings a day--and that's a lot of meetings--that's a hundred and twenty-five or over a hundred and twenty-five consecutive days of meetings. And he met with congressmen and senators who he knew were likely to be opposed to the program, not just with friends. He went out there

personally to try to explain it to them, and he was a very persuasive person, and he personally became--a lot of congressmen and senators believed in Shriver and believed in what he said. They found out not only that he came to see them but if they called him afterward, they would get a telephone call back and it would come from Shriver personally and not from somebody in the legislative liaison office and that something would be done. Shriver did establish, in many ways, a new pattern which many congressmen and senators were not used to--of personal diplomacy, you might say. And that carried over into OEO. It was well known as the legislation was being passed that there was a serious question as to whether Shriver was going to be the director of OEO or not. And Shriver made it clear a number of times in the hearings that he didn't know whether he was going to be director and he personally hoped that he would not be the director. And I know personally that Shriver did not want to be director of OEO.

G: Really? Can you elaborate on that? Did he say something to that effect or--?

W: Well, it was clear in a variety of ways. From the beginning, Shriver made it clear to me that his job--and he had been asked by the President--[was] to put together the legislation and to get the legislation passed, and that as soon as the legislation was passed he expected that somebody would be selected to head the program and that would be it. Furthermore, he was still very much wrapped up in the operations of the Peace Corps. He still loved the Peace

Corps, he was starting to carry out a few specific assignments that were not strictly Peace Corps related but they were kind of diplomatically related. I think at one point in time Lyndon Johnson sent him to meet the Pope in Jerusalem or something like that, for example, as a presidential representative. And he enjoyed the role that he was playing there very much. He really did not see himself as being the head of the poverty program and didn't seek it, and I don't think he wanted it.

Everything that was involved in all his actions after the basic legislation was passed in August of 1964 were actions which saw him basically staying away from the main issues of the program at that point in time and clearly waiting for a signal from the President as to whether he was going to run the Peace Corps or whether he was going to run the poverty program. And it was a signal which did not come for a long period of time. As you recall, he was head of both programs for quite a long period of time. And this was to some extent a problem for OEO, because it was difficult enough to run one agency like OEO, much less run OEO and Peace Corps besides.

G: This was at a time when there was no assistant director, too, wasn't it?

W: That's correct. There was no deputy director involved at that time.

So that I think there's every evidence from my point of view--and I was very closely involved at that time--that Shriver didn't

expect to be selected and did not want to be selected to run the poverty program. He saw himself as a person with a short-term mission.

G: And yet so many members of Congress assumed that he would be the director.

W: I think that's true. I think that's true.

G: Why was he chosen to head the agency? Do you know?

W: I think he was chosen to head the agency for several reasons. Number one, he had the congressional support. Number two, he had the just enough but not too much of a connection with the Kennedy family, being a brother-in-law but not of the Kennedy name. It was well known that he was a Kennedy, so to speak, so that from a political point of view, Johnson could say, you know, "I'm continuing the tradition of the Kennedys," but at the same time he had the kind of the political protection that if something went wrong or if somebody blew up, well, there was a Kennedy running it. But on the other hand if it went right, Johnson could take the credit for it.

I think it was a very smart political move on Johnson's part to keep Shriver as head of the program. Shriver was very highly respected. He was respected domestically among mayors and governors. He was the kind of person who could call up any mayor or call up any governor, and the person on the other end of the phone would know exactly who he was talking to and he would carry a lot of force. He did not have I guess what I would call a known political bent other than being basically kind of a liberal Shriverism. What I'm

talking about is Politics with a big "P". He wasn't aligned with Mayor [Richard] Daley or aligned with the Mayor of New York or aligned with a particular region of the country in the way that many prominent people in Washington are. And in that way, he was qualified to run a program which would be handing out grants all across the country, more qualified, let's say than somebody who came up through operating the Appalachia program who would be immediately seen as favoring rural areas and particularly Appalachia over urban areas or somebody who was a former mayor of a northeastern city who would be seen as favoring big older cities as compared to new southern cities or something like that. Shriver came. Other than the fact that he came as a liberal Democrat, [he] was not tinged with any local political prejudices.

G: Did Johnson himself play a role in the legislative phase of the bill?

W: Yes, I think it's quite clear that at several crucial points, major issues such as the apportionment formula in the Community Action Program were taken straight to the President himself--

G: Really?

W: --to determine what the reaction was going to be to those points. I think the point that was debated and negotiated on in the Senate side as to whether governors would have veto power over the location of the Job Corps center, clearly went to the President. Now, I did not see it specifically go to the President, but it was known to me that the President had said that this was an issue in which

we would go along with the governors and that we would negotiate that issue. In my position I was aware through Shriver and to some extent through [Adam] Yarmolinsky what the White House position was on these various issues.

G: Was this a question of pragmatism, going along with the governors or going along with the apportionment process in order to get the legislation passed?

W: I think it was a sense that compromise would be required in order to get the legislation passed. It was a complex piece of legislation, and in the House it was a borderline question as to whether we had the votes or not, plus I think it was a question of some of Johnson's personal philosophies that came out of his entire life experience and that was a certain sense of how things were done in this particular country, and that is that outside of military programs, that federal government simply doesn't go in and do something in a state over the governor's opposition or at least give itself the authority to do this in any state that it wants to anywhere. The question of the governor's opposition to Job Corps centers had risen very early and a number of governors had inquired--I'm sure directly to the President--over were they going to be involved in determining whether there were going to be Job Corps centers in their state or not. And I can see just from what I know of the President that it would have been his position to have said, "Why, of course you're going to be involved. I don't want to be in a position of jamming something down your throat."

G: Was the fact that funds would be shifted from other programs to OEO, did that create a problem? I think for example thirty-five million was shifted from the Appalachia program. Did this generate opposition?

W: It never really came up as a major issue, I think for two reasons. In part because while some funds might have been shifted in theory, in some cases these were funds which had been requested but which there was very serious doubt about whether they would ever in fact be appropriated, and therefore there was a feeling that through OEO, these funds would more probably be appropriated and become real dollars as opposed to funds which were simply authorized but in which there was no serious intent to appropriate a major proportion of the dollars. And as you know in many government programs, there are large sums authorized but the appropriations are often a relatively small fraction of the dollars authorized, and you can't spend authorized dollars. And secondly, it was so clear right from the beginning that this was the President's program, that apart from Willard Wirtz, there really was not a whole lot of opposition within the administration. With respect to certain congressmen like Congressman [W. R.] Poage, there were questions about whether funds were going to be shifted from some of their specific and pet programs, because some congressmen have established relationships with certain programs like the Farmers Home Administration in which they have really a great deal of influence over what goes on in that program and they were of course reluctant

to see funds shifted from that program over to OEO, but I don't recall that this was really a major issue.

G: Do you recall Shriver dealing with Poage and [Harold] Cooley on this issue of FHA funds?

W: Yes, I do. I remember both Poage and Cooley were very skeptical, and as a matter of fact, one of the main concerns was why these funds were not going to come up before their committee--that is the House Agriculture Committee--as opposed to the House Education and Labor Committee. I think what they saw here was an eroding of their influence possibly, the idea that the funds going to the Farmers Home Administration were now going to be managed by Shriver and go through the House Education and Labor Committee and that fellow over there, Adam Clayton Powell. That was not welcomed at all by Congressman Poage, and I'm sure that some of his constituents probably gave him a hard time over that situation, and I think all you have to do was look at the dynamics of those people and understand why that would be the case.

G: Do you recall how the compromise over the church-state issue was reached? You've mentioned this in your first interview. There was a serious rift.

W: There was a serious rift right at the beginning, a serious question about whether OEO would be making grants to religious organizations and if so, under what circumstances. I must say at this point in time while I was involved in that particular factor I have a hard time remembering exactly how that compromise was reached, although

I remember that in April, May and June, this was one of the major items on which we spent a lot of time trying to work out language that would be acceptable. But I must admit that right now my memory fails me on that point.

G: Was Hugh Carey involved?

W: Oh, yes. Hugh Carey was the primary proponent of course of a fairly liberal interpretation of that, being a Catholic from New York City, and was very anxious that religious organizations not be excluded from participating in the poverty program.

G: I take it whatever the version, it had to satisfy Carey at least partially?

W: Yes, yes, and this was a point that was negotiated largely on the House side rather than the Senate side. The Senate side was really not very much concerned about church-state issues.

G: Do you recall the scheduling of businessmen to testify in favor of the bill?

W: Yes, I do. I remember being part of the group that were trying to figure out who should testify in favor of the bill and trying to set up the various witnesses which came from all sorts of potential constituent groups. One of Shriver's main concerns was that the people who would testify for the bill would not simply be the same old people who would obviously testify in favor of any piece of social legislation like this, and therefore was a personal move of Shriver's to get some major businessmen involved and also to set up a committee, an advisory committee that involved a number of

major corporate figures who could provide a basis for saying that corporations supported something like a poverty program. They felt that this was extremely important.

I'm trying to remember who the businessmen who testified [were].

G: Tom Nichols was one.

W: Tom Nichols. Yes, I remember him. I think Shriver felt it was particularly important. I don't think the businessmen's testimony had any influence on Congress at all.

G: Now Mayor Daley, among others, testified, also.

W: Yes, he did.

G: There seems to have been a difference between his description of the program and the OEO people who testified. Do you recall that?

W: I remember I was supposed to brief Mayor Daley before he went up to testify and that was a waste of time on my part. He was not about to be briefed on anything. I mean, he just sort of knew what he was going to say before he went up, but he didn't care what the facts were.

G: Really?

W: And I'm not sure that it made any difference what the facts were. The fact that Mayor Daley was there and that he was going to testify for the bill was enough.

G: But was it recognized that the program would run differently in Chicago, that he'd run it the way he wanted to?

W: You know, it's funny on a situation like that. I think everybody knew that Mayor Daley was an extremely powerful mayor and that he pretty much directed anything that was going to happen in Chicago and if there was maybe going to be an anti-poverty program in Chicago, it was going to be run substantially as Mayor Daley wanted it, and that there was going to be an interesting confrontation between Washington and Chicago over that, but that in that case Mayor Daley was probably going to win because Washington didn't have the marbles to do something in Chicago that Mayor Daley didn't want done. He was at least nearly unique in that sense as a mayor of a big city. I don't know of any comparable mayor that could control things in a city in the same way that Mayor Daley did.

G: And certainly Shriver, having lived in Chicago, was familiar with Daley and--

W: They were familiar with each other, but they were not friends by any means.

G: Really?

W: No. As a matter of fact, I believe it would have been 1966 when Shriver was hoping to run for senator from Illinois.

G: Or governor, one of the two?

W: Or governor. No, I think it was senator. I think he was and I know that there was a nominating convention that was going to take place in Chicago of the Democratic Party to decide who would be nominated as Democratic candidate for senator. Shriver had been given to understand that Daley would support it at the nominating

convention, and Shriver felt pretty good about that, because one of the frustrations of Shriver's political life, of course, was that he'd never held a major elective office, even though he tried several times. And I remember Shriver was extremely upset when I think the day after the convention--although I suppose it was probably the night of the convention--it became clear that Daley wasn't going to support Shriver at all, he was supporting somebody else. I've forgotten who the other candidate was at the time. But it was clear at that point in time that Daley had pulled a number on Shriver.

I think it was well known that while Shriver may have lived in Chicago for a while that Daley did not think of Shriver as being a Chicagoan or a representative of Illinois in any sense and he certainly--in a sense, Daley was much more interested in having people in Washington that he could control. There was a congressman on the House Education and Labor Committee--[Roman] Pucinski--who was well known that was pretty much under control by Mayor Daley, and I think that was the kind of people that Mayor Daley wanted in Washington. He did not want people of independent authority, and Shriver was clearly independent. He was not about to be controlled by Daley, and therefore was more of a threat to Daley than someone that Daley would want to support.

G: Do you recall any individual congressman or senator as being linked or linking their support to other pieces of legislation, for example, "I'll support OEO if you'll support X piece of legislation that I'm interested in for my district or my state."

W: I honestly never recall anything like that coming up either on the House side or on the Senate side. There might be some fact that would refresh my memory, I suppose, I'm not saying that it didn't happen, but I can't recall anything like that ever really emerging as a major factor.

G: Did congressmen make their support conditional on having candidates for OEO positions? Did they have their own candidates they wanted to have for, say, head of the Job Corps or head of this or that?

W: There may have been a few such situations like that, and certainly OEO almost from the day that it opened its doors in February--the task force--was absolutely flooded with congressional referrals. We had a separate office that dealt with nothing but congressional referrals and that was a major operation. We had several hundred at a time on lists of people that we were supposed to be looking at to hire at OEO, if and when it ever got operating of course, originally, and then later as it expanded. I think initially the pressure came in the opposite direction, that is, concern on the part of some congressmen, opposition to specific people rather than proposing certain people. Shriver himself, while he certainly listened to congressmen and leaned a long way towards hiring people that were backed by the Hill in operating positions, very much chose his own people for top positions. And he was not the kind of person that would allow anyone to be stuffed down his throat, so to speak, simply because some powerful congressman or senator wanted it. Shriver went out and found his own people and screened them.

Shriver's technique in seeking people to take the top positions was to bring in dozens of people from all across the country that might meet certain requirements that he felt were important for a particular position. For example, for the Job Corps, he wanted a university official. He wanted somebody who had headed a university because he felt that that was needed in order to give more credibility. For Community Action he wanted somebody who had been a mayor and who came out of local government.

G: Did he want a black, also, or did that matter?

W: Yes, he was very interested in having a black as head of OEO. The opposition to Yarmolinsky as deputy director of OEO is well known and there was certainly some opposition to Jack Conway as head of Community Action because Jack Conway was known as a pretty liberal liberal and with a strong union background, and that was a concern to a lot of southern congressmen, but not enough to knock Jack out.

G: Let's talk about the Adam Yarmolinsky episode. First of all, your insight into the origin of it and how he in effect was excluded from the position.

W: Well, Yarmolinsky came into the Kennedy Administration through the Defense Department, and in the Defense Department he was instrumental in a number of ways, but one of the main things that he was instrumental in was in declaring segregated facilities off limits to military personnel in the South which meant that bars, restaurants, taverns and so on near military bases had to be integrated or else military personnel were not allowed to patronize them. Well, this

created a furor in congressional districts all across the South because there are a lot of military bases in the South and there are a lot of commercial establishments right around them that have grown up patronizing military personnel. This created a major furor.

In addition, it was well known that Adam Yarmolinsky's mother, I guess, is Babette Deutsch originally, who was a known and professed communist, that Adam himself of course is Jewish. He came out of an egg-head, intellectual university and he was the guy who had integrated all those places in the South. So he had at least four reasons, any one of which would have made a southern congressman oppose him. By the time you added those four reasons together, you got a pretty powerful group of southern congressman who said that this is the kind of person that as far as we're concerned is persona non grata--anywhere. Certainly not to run the poverty program and do the kinds that he's been doing with commercial establishments, making commercial establishments off limits to servicemen.

G: Was it principally the North Carolina delegation?

W: The center was in the North Carolina delegation, no question about it.

G: And do you think would it have been different had the vote not been very close at this point, or the polls, I guess, that the legislative liaisons were taking seemed to indicate it was real close.

W: The polls--there's no question that the vote was hairline at that time. I have to feel that it would have been different because the

opposition was solely within a very closely-knit group, small group of southern congressmen. There was not a generalized opposition. There wasn't any flood of newspaper writings from either liberal or conservative newspapers against Yarmolinsky being involved in the poverty program. There wasn't any of the kind of tide of things that go on with the appointment of a person to a controversial position. And goodness knows, in Washington, D. C. when anybody is possibly to get appointed to a position, there are reporters out all over the place trying to track down anything that they can dig up that would suggest why or why that person should not be appointed to that position. You don't have to ask people to go out and do that, it gets done very effectively by our press and media. I don't recall that there was--I know as far as I was concerned and as far as everybody else was concerned, when Landrum stood up on the floor of the House and said that there'd been a deal made to get rid of Yarmolinsky, it struck everybody like a bolt out of the blue. No one had any idea that it was coming. I don't think Adam had any idea that it was coming until perhaps twenty-four hours ahead of time.

G: I think it was right before the legislation was passed, is that right?

W: It was, it was when it was coming down to the crucial vote. It was the same day.

G: Well, did you find out the details later, what had happened? The nature of the--

W: We found out the details, as I recall, the next day or within a couple of days.

G: I think there was a party that night, wasn't there?

W: There was a party that night at a house over in Georgetown that several people on the task force lived in, because the basic vote-- I think not the final vote but the crucial vote on the legislation was taken that day and it was clear that it was going to go. And I think Adam knew what had happened. I didn't know precisely what had happened at that point in time, other than some deal had been made that he would not be part of the management of OEO. I didn't know exactly what the deal was or quite why it had been made.

G: Did the task force people tend to blame Johnson for that?

W: And Shriver.

G: And Shriver?

W: And Shriver. Shriver more than Johnson, I think, perhaps. I think Shriver because one would have expected perhaps that the President would have made perhaps that kind of decision, but there was a lot of feeling on many people's part that Shriver stood for certain ideals, and political execution was not something that Shriver would tolerate. Yet I think it was pretty clear that in this case Shriver certainly didn't come out with any laurels on his head out of this interchange. I think a lot of people felt that Shriver should have said, "If Yarmolinsky goes, I go," you know, "If that's the way this program's going to be run," because they had seen him do that in other circumstances. I think this is another example of

the fact that Shriver really didn't expect to run the program, and he didn't see himself as deciding at that point in time who was going to run it and who was going to be his deputy or anything else like that. I think he saw himself as doing whatever was necessary in order to get the program through.

G: Another version of this episode was that Shriver had been in the position, or had placed himself in the position of assuring perhaps Cooley on the one hand that no appointments had been made, that Yarmolinsky was not at all destined for that position, and on the other, people realizing that Yarmolinsky would be the deputy director and that being caught in this position was what really solidified the opposition to Yarmolinsky.

W: Well, I think that Shriver certainly made the point that nobody had been appointed to OEO, that there wasn't even any agency to appoint anybody to and therefore how could anybody be appointed, that he hadn't been appointed director and Yarmolinsky hadn't been appointed deputy director and therefore the whole issue was moot. But the people like Cooley simply wouldn't accept that as a statement of position.

G: Sure. But wasn't Cooley in effect right? Wasn't Yarmolinsky scheduled to be, or presumed to be, the deputy director?

W: Oh, I think he was the odds-on favorite, but it was certainly true that nobody had been committed to anything at that point in time in part because, as I said, Shriver really did not particularly want to run the poverty program and I think any director of an agency has

the right to choose his own deputy, and that's pretty well known. It's backwards to choose the deputy director and then go out and try to find a director. But clearly Yarmolinsky was the guy at that time who was the leader in all the work that was being done on major policy issues that did not have congressional overtones. Shriver was really only involved at that time in issues that had congressional implications.

G: To what extent do you think Congress understood the Community Action program as it was passed?

W: Well, I don't--

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G: Congress did make a change in Community Action with regard to allowing assistance to local public groups or private groups for non-comprehensive, non-coordinated programs. Did you see this as watering down Community Action somewhat?

W: I think this was made largely because there were a number of groups that went back to Congress that had very specific and limited charters, you might say--for example, adult education--that saw themselves as being if not excluded as certainly having a very, very tough time getting what they would like to see as a share of their funds of the Community Action funds, and they didn't always want to be wrapped up in the comprehensive program idea. And they wanted to make sure that they could get a separate piece.

G: But did those who favored a comprehensive overall solution to the poverty problem see this as a real weakening of the philosophy?

W: Yes, I think so. Yes, they did. There was a continuing wrestling between I guess what you would call the comprehensives and the single objective school. Head Start, of course, was the major break in the idea of comprehensiveness, and then after that there were a number of other things that came out to get separate treatment within the idea of Community Action. Plus I feel that the basic idea of Community Action as a whole, that is the necessity of a comprehensive and coordinated approach, really broke down in too many instances particularly in the larger cities where it was just--in New York City the idea of getting all the agencies together even in a place like Harlem, much less at the city level, was almost impossible. The problems were too big, there were too many organizations that were too unwilling to work with one another.

I know from my later experience in New York City--after I left OEO in June of 1966 I went with Mayor John Lindsay and ran the summer anti-poverty program in New York City, and I know our own experience in New York City was that the so-called umbrella organizations in Harlem and in Brooklyn were very bureaucratic, very difficult to get anything done through and took up huge amounts of budget money to operate staffs that really didn't seem to be able to get anything done. They were just another layer of large bureaucracy and we ended up bypassing them and giving a tremendous amount of money to small block organizations that operated, that had perhaps ten thousand dollars to run a small youth recreation program in one or two blocks. So in part, I think, the comprehensiveness thesis fell

apart in practice because it simply wasn't working in a lot of situations, not all situations, but certainly a lot of situations that just didn't seem to be able to function.

G: There was a provision in the rural component to have what has been referred to as an agrarian reform or a land reform provision and that was tossed out at the legislative phase, I believe. Do you recall why that was jettisoned?

W: There were a couple of parts of the initial legislative presentation that were discarded, and as I recall, [it] became clear that they were going to be discarded literally within two or three weeks after the presentation was made. I had the impression that those decisions were made not at any organized format but simply because some of the congressmen that were concerned in those areas--like Congressman Cooley and so on--simply called the right people and said, "Look, I'm not going to go for that and I think you ought to just get rid of that." I had a very strong impression that those sections were dealt with in that way. In other words, they were just very quietly--everybody agreed that, number one, they were going to go, and number two, it wasn't worth fighting for them, given where the opposition was coming from.

G: Did the rural members of the task force, people like Jim Sundquist, put up a fight to retain these provisions or was it--?

W: Not particularly. None of the provisions that were jettisoned along the way seemed to generate a huge amount of opposition. I think in part, again, they fell into that category of programs that had been

flown up to Congress before in one format or another and had been shot down, and therefore the proponents were ready to say again "Well, we tried, you know we tried it for the third time and it didn't work, we'll wait for the next time to come along and see whether we can get it through the next time."

I think there's a certain amount of feeling that many legislative programs or many programs have been presented to Congress two or three times before they finally get passed. There was never any great feeling that the omnibus proposal that was made had to be passed as one single package and that you had to take it or leave it, that there were parts of it that were stuck in not because they were part of an integrated whole, but because we had to be able to say there was something in there for rural areas, there was something in there for urban areas, there was something in there for high school dropouts, there was something in there for volunteers and so on. And if somebody came along and said, "Well, look, you don't need that piece for rural areas, and if it happened to be the guy in Congress who was the number one proponent of farm legislation or rural area legislation, there wasn't going to be a big fight about it.

G: One thing that was added was indemnity payments for dairy farmers. Do you recall how this was added to the [bill]?

W: Oh, yes, I remember. That was very controversial. That was something that appeared literally out of the blue. Nobody could figure out why or where. This was strictly a special interest thing that was tacked on to the bill. I forget whether this came from Poage or

whether it came from some other area. There was all sorts of--there was horror in OEO that this thing was getting tacked on to the bill, not over the substantive question of indemnity payments to farmers but simply because it obviously had no relationship to anything that we were dealing with, and that adding this on suddenly added a controversial new aspect to the bill that certainly didn't simplify the task and could make it a lot more complicated.

G: Congress also added aid for migrant farm workers at the legislative stage. Do you recall the addition of this?

W: Yes, I do, and I think the initial reaction was that perhaps this could be covered under Community Action but that then when we sat back and said, "Well, you know, migrant farm workers are migrant, and therefore perhaps this makes some sense." I recall that trying to figure out how to administer it was kind of a rat's nest and that it created a complication from the management point of view.

G: How do you mean? Can you elaborate on that?

W: Well, simply because trying to develop--everyone realized that there was a problem with migrant farm workers but that nobody was quite sure how to deal with it or what to do about it, and it faced us with a problem of having to develop what everyone saw as a new and difficult area of activity.

G: Congress also added a section requiring a disclaimer or an affidavit by individuals employed under the act. Do you recall this? It was basically, I guess, some sort of loyalty oath or some sort of--

W: It was a loyalty oath for, particularly I think they applied it to Job Corps enrollees, but not to civil servants, as I recall. I think it was for VISTA volunteers and Job Corps enrollees. There was universal opposition on the part of everybody who was involved in the task force at the time to the concept of an oath, a loyalty oath so to speak, and this went right up to the top of the organization including people like Jack Conway who this didn't affect directly because he wasn't concerned with Job Corps or VISTA in a supervisory position. I think it went back to--it raised concerns about McCarthyism, and the idea that you would require a loyalty oath of a sixteen or seventeen-year-old high school dropout who never got past the fifth or sixth or seventh grade struck many people as being something that was just plain wrong. Furthermore, most of us saw this, and I think correctly, as a tactic by a group of very conservative southern congressmen to create a nuisance area, something which would create difficulty and which might be controversial and which would be more like a roadblock. Because I don't think it does make sense to give sixteen and seventeen-year-old kids a loyalty oath. This was sponsored, I think, by one of the congressmen from Mississippi, as I recall, and I think it was seen as a tactic to simply make life difficult, when you get right down to it.

G: Did the protracted legislative struggle make it difficult to plan the program and get it organized? I think it went on from, let's see, it was submitted in March and was finally passed in August, but you still didn't have your appropriation--

W: Until October.

G: --until October.

W: Well the management task was an awesome one. And in different areas, it created different kinds of problems because the management challenges were quite different as regards to the different programs. The challenge to the Community Action Program was really not that great, because they were essentially asking cities and Community Action agencies and so on to submit proposals according to certain guidelines, proposals which could be funded whenever essentially the money came in and the proposals could be reviewed. And the only problem with Community Action was getting regional offices set up and getting the review capabilities set up so that you could look through proposals and make sure that what was being proposed was consistent with what was intended.

With respect to VISTA, the problem was greater simply because one had to set up recruitment systems, selection systems, negotiate training contracts with universities and other organizations, negotiate placement situations with individual agencies to take VISTA volunteers, and this took a pretty considerable amount of direct work. Furthermore, one had to tie all of these things together, to some extent at least had to recruit certain kinds of people, put them through specific kinds of training and put them in a specific situation. The training was not just general training. If you were going to an Indian reservation, you were trained to some extent in rural health care, let's say, and in the manners and attitudes

and habits and customs of the individual location which you were going to. You couldn't put somebody through Indian training and then send them to Harlem. So there was a much greater challenge there.

The place where the uncertainty of when funds would be available impinged most was on the Job Corps, because there the management task was nearly impossible. We were supposed to have ten thousand kids in Job Corps Centers within eight months after funds became available. The funds were appropriated in October; by June 30, the objective was to have ten thousand kids in a camp. Well, let's say you assumed roughly a ten-to-one staff ratio, and even that is larger. I think actually we hired something like thirty-five hundred people over a period of seven or eight months using the civil service system, which is a cumbersome system if you're trying to act quickly. It is not a cumbersome system if you're trying to act slowly and be careful who you screen and who you screen out. But if you're trying to hire three thousand people in six months or seven months, it's almost impossible because not only do they have to pass certain tests and everything else like that, but they have to get the test scores and then their credit checks, personal checks and everything else that has to be run. Ordering I think by June 30 we had perhaps something like thirty Job Corps centers open and maybe twenty conservation centers and ten urban centers. It may have been somewhat less than that, but it was quite a few. Every one was supposed to be completely and fully trained with books, curriculum materials, learning materials, kitchen utensils, food, everything that is

necessary to set up and run, what you might say, a vocational training school. The problem was setting up twenty or twenty-five vocational training schools fully equipped and ready to open their doors in eight months, using the federal systems. That's tough, and it didn't work.

G: I hope next time we can go into that in detail and I can get you to recount all of the agonies of each specific case with regard to Job Corps and OEO administration, but is there anything else that we ought to add to the 1964 legislative submission that we haven't touched on?

W: I don't think so right now. I don't think so. I think we've pretty much covered that.

G: Well, I really thank you.

[End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview II]

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