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May 28, 1964

Committee Approves  
Anti-Poverty Bill

WASHINGTON (BP)-- The President's "war on poverty" proposal won approval in the House Education and Labor Committee here. It must clear the House Rules Committee before going to the floor for debate.

The bill, as reported out of the committee, authorizes \$962.5 million for one year. Some changes were made but basically the bill is the same as President Johnson presented it with his special message to Congress earlier this year.

Significant among the changes is the deletion of any federal aid to schools, public or private. The bill originally provided assistance for anti-poverty projects, such as remedial courses and adult classes, to be administered through public schools.

In the new version the committee specified that none of the funds could be used "for general aid to elementary or secondary education in any school or school system." The compromise reportedly came after pressure from some committee members to include parochial schools. The committee sought to avoid jeopardizing the bill in a church-state controversy.

Another change came in the work-study program for college students. Originally the bill provided that such programs could not involve those facilities of the school used for "sectarian instruction or as a place of religious worship."

The new version bars them from facilities used "solely" for religious instruction or worship. This would allow for possible employment of students in anti-poverty projects held on playgrounds, in recreation halls or other church property, so long as such projects are open to all.

Though no funds would go to schools under the provisions of the bill, funds could go to community organizations to conduct "special, remedial and other noncurricular" education programs as part of local efforts to eliminate poverty. The section on community action programs was a source of confusion in committee hearings. Both public and private agencies could be aided in their projects to combat poverty.

Added to the measure is a provision to give housing, sanitation, educational and child care assistance to migrant farm laborers.

Other changes would permit young women to enroll in the proposed Job Corps, establish allocation formulas for distributing anti-poverty funds to states, and name the domestic version of the Peace Corps "VISTA" (Volunteers in Service to America).

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Baptist Colleges  
Get Federal Loans

(5-28-64)

WASHINGTON (BP)-- Two Baptist schools are among 30 colleges approved for college housing loans, according to announcement from Commissioner Sidney H. Woolner of the Community Facilities Administration.

Colorado Woman's College, Denver, was approved for a \$841,000 loan and Ottawa (Kan.) University for a \$670,000 loan, to construct new dormitories. Both schools are affiliated with the American Baptist Convention.

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The two Baptist schools were among 15 church-related colleges approved for loans totaling \$15,110,000. The other church schools included Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian.

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House Votes Expanded  
Hospital Aid Bill

(5-28-64)

WASHINGTON (BP)-- Extension and expansion of the Hill-Burton hospital construction program cleared the U. S. House of Representatives in a voice vote. The bill now goes to the Senate for action.

The bill would extend the present Hill-Burton act, with some modification, for another five years. It would authorize a total of \$1,362,500,000 for construction and modernization.

Existing Hill-Burton law, which expires this year, provides funds for construction of public or nonprofit hospitals and public health centers, diagnostic or treatment centers, hospitals for the chronically ill, rehabilitation facilities, and nursing homes. Since it was first enacted in 1946, the program has helped build 6,810 hospitals.

The new proposal would maintain the loan provision for private hospitals. A private hospital could apply for a loan for either new construction or modernization.

Besides extending the Hill-Burton program, the bill would:

(1) Authorize appropriations for construction and modernization of hospitals, with funds specifically earmarked for modernization. Existing law does not provide earmarking funds for modernization. The new bill would authorize states to transfer sums from modernization category to new construction, as well as transfer from new construction to modernization.

(2) Combine nursing home and chronic disease categories and increase the combined authorization.

(3) Add grants for area-wide health facility planning in metropolitan and other areas, on a federal-state matching basis. Grants could be made to the state agency but activities could be carried out by the local public or nonprofit group.

(4) Permit states to use two per cent of their allotments for state administration of the construction program, on a 50-50 matching basis.

In line with a recent court ruling, the bill omits the "separate but equal clause" in the original Hill-Burton Act. Earlier this year the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit ruled, in the case of two private hospitals in North Carolina, that acceptance of Hill-Burton grants is "sufficient involvement to imbue the activities of the hospitals with 'state action' and bring them within the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendment prohibitions against racial discrimination." The Supreme Court declined to review the case, thereby upholding the lower court's opinion.

The present bill provides that "the facility or portion thereof to be constructed or modernized will be made available to all persons residing in the territorial area of the applicant."

The measure contains most of the requests made by President Johnson in a special health message to Congress earlier this year. However, it does not include the administration request for a loan guarantee program to nonprofit hospitals.

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Presidential Adviser  
Hits Prayer Proposals

(5-28-64)

WASHINGTON (BP)-- Brooks Hays, consultant to President Lyndon B. Johnson and former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, attacked here efforts to change the United States Constitution to provide for government sponsored religious exercises in public schools.

The views of the political and religious leader were made known in a letter to Rep. Emanuel Celler (D., N. Y.), chairman of the House Judiciary Committee. Hearings were in progress on the "Becker amendment" and other proposals to overturn the 1962 and 1963 decisions of the Supreme Court relating to devotions in public schools.

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Although he had not discussed the problem with the President, Hays said, "I am confident he would not object to my submitting these observations."

The Hays statement commended the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs for its defense of the First Amendment. He said "the Committee has rendered excellent service in examining the powers of government over religious devotions for the public schools."

"God does not need any patronizing ceremonies," Hays declared as he pled for the "voluntary character" of prayer. "Prayers that are offered in response to a law requiring them lose a quality that is an essential part of meaningful prayer," he said.

Many questions about religion in schools remain unanswered, Hays said. But he continued, "I have felt that the Court could not have decided otherwise than it did."

The solution to these problems does not lie in governmental interference, not even local governments, he said. Rather, church leaders and educators "can work out some new suggestions that will embody the growing good will among the religious bodies," Hays pointed out.

Hasty efforts to amend the Constitution before other clarifying rulings come from the Supreme Court were hit by the President's consultant. He expressed the conviction that future rulings would make it clear that religion in the schools is not proscribed but only that government control and regulation are ruled out."

"If I am wrong in my conclusions," Hays wrote, "I believe that drafting an amendment dealing with so vital a subject as religious freedom should not be undertaken until there shall have been a thorough consideration of the matter by the people to be affected and that means all of the people of the United States."



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