

NATIONAL



NWRO
WELFARE RIGHTS ORGANIZATION

November 22, 1968

The Honorable Wilbur Cohen
Department of Health, Education & Welfare
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The National Welfare Rights Organization is concerned that HEW has not moved to implement Sec. 402(a) (23) of the 1967 Social Security Amendments. This Section requires that by July 1, 1969, the standards used to determine need be adjusted by each state to reflect fully changes in cost of living since these standards were established; and that any maximum imposed by the states be proportionately adjusted.

Louisiana is presently moving to cut its AFDC grants in spite of vigorous protests of NWRO affiliates there. Other states are considering similar action. To our knowledge, no state has moved to upgrade its AFDC standards or maximums.

It is imperative that HEW promptly communicate to the states their responsibility to comply with this section. You should also clear up the confusion which members of your staff have been creating by telling people that states have no legal duty to upgrade their payments when they upgrade their standards. This position makes a cruel mockery of one of the few progressive provisions of the 1967 amendments. It is devoid of either logic or basis in the statute or legislative history.

A memorandum from one of our legal counselors in support of our position is enclosed.

I would appreciate a prompt indication of the action you plan to take on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

(signed)

George A. Wiley
Executive Director

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