



National Welfare Rights Organization
1419 H Street, Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Friend,

NWRO has been working with the movement to end the war because that is the beginning of the fight to obtain an adequate income for all Americans. For every three seconds that we remain in Southeast Asia, America spends enough money to provide \$5500 for a family of four.

One of the problems NWRO and its supporters face is the massive task of changing this nation's priorities. This is clear from the manner in which the Administration has ignored even the Nixon 'reform' welfare plan. Senator Long, Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, sent the bill back to HEW to be properly written. Secretary Finch promised that the rewritten bill would be submitted within two weeks. Not another word has been heard about this bill for more than a month.

Enclosed in this mailing you will find material that will make your discussions on adequate income more meaningful. A description of NWRO's action at HEW is included. 23 welfare mothers, led by Beulah Saunders, Margaret Hayes, and Marion Kidd, walked into Finch's office and demanded that he publicly voice his opposition to the Cambodian war and that he publicly denounce the Nixon plan because of its inadequacy.

Secretary Finch refused to take a stand on either issue. This led to a nine hour sit-in and the subsequent arrest of the mothers on disorderly conduct charges. As an aftermath of the action, several hundred H.E.W. employees are pressuring Mr. Finch concerning his lack of leadership in bringing about needed reform. Some of these failures are:

1. Under existing law, the states were required to raise their welfare standards of need to reflect current living costs by July 1, 1969. Secretary Finch has failed to enforce this law.

2. Under existing law, Secretary Finch is empowered to require comprehensive physical examinations and medical treatment for poor children under the age of 21. Mr. Finch has failed to implement this provision.

3. NWRO staff and leadership have met regularly with HEW officials over the past 15 months documenting literally thousands of violations of federal welfare law. Mr. Finch has made only token moves toward securing compliance.

4. During 1969, Secretary Finch promised to consult with the National Welfare Rights Organization about the new federal welfare legislation HEW was developing. That promise was not kept.

(continued on back page)

The Weather

District and vicinity—Partly cloudy with chance of evening thunderstorms. Low tonight in the mid 60s. High tomorrow about 84. Chance of rain 50 percent tomorrow and 40 percent tonight. Today's low, 62 at 5:15 a.m.; today's high, 80 at 1 p.m.

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The Ever

WITH SUNDAY MO

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Protesters Occupy



Beulah Sanders sits behind HEW Secretary Robert Finch's desk after she and other demonstrators

Copy Finch's Office

Welfare Group Seeks \$5,500 Annual Income

By DAVID HOLMBERG
Star Staff Writer

Fifteen members of the National Welfare Rights Organization, led by its director, Dr. George Wiley, occupied the office of Health, Education and Welfare Secretary Robert Finch today.

Finch was in his office being interviewed by two reporters when the demonstrators burst in about 11:30 a.m. Finch, according to a HEW spokesman, reacted "calmly" to the intrusion.

Wiley seated himself in the secretary's large leather chair, and the demonstrators then held an hour-long discussion with Finch.

Demands Stated

They demanded that the Nixon administration end its military activities in Cambodia and institute a guaranteed annual income of \$5,500 for a family of four.

The HEW spokesman said Finch responded that he did not have the authority to alter policies in Cambodia and told the demonstrators that a minimum income of \$5,500 is "simply not feasible" at present.

He noted that the administration had called for a \$1,600 minimum, which would be supplemented with additional payments by individual states. The demonstrators said this was inadequate.

Finch left his office for an appointment at about 12:30 p.m. and the demonstrators remained there, with Wiley and other NWRO leaders taking turns occupying Finch's chair.

Office 'Liberated'

Wiley said the office had been "liberated" and that the group would remain until the administration met its demands.

"This administration should be fighting for poor people, not killing them in Southeast Asia," Wiley said.

He said his organization would issue "policy directives" during the occupation of the office.

A few policemen were stationed in the hallway near Finch's fifth-floor office, but HEW officials said there were no immediate plans to remove the demonstrators.

Outside the HEW Building, meanwhile, about 150 more demonstrators chanted and shouted their support for the "occupation." The demonstrators marched to HEW from Capitol Hill, where they had held a brief meeting on the Capitol steps and were told that Finch's office had been occupied.

The group carried signs reading "\$5,500 or fight," "\$1,600 not enough," and "Nixon unfair to people."



—Star Photographer Pete Schmick

look over his office.

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5. In early 1969, Mr. Finch agreed with us that a federally defined standard of "adequate income" had to be developed and promised to proceed with this project. Secretary Finch did not keep that promise.

6. Under a recent amendment to the Housing and Urban Development Act by Senator Brooke, poor people need not pay more than 25% of their income for rent in public housing. Although NWRO and Senator Brooke himself urged the Secretary to interpret the law in a way that benefits welfare recipients, the Secretary has interpreted it in a way that makes it meaningless for welfare. As it now stands, the law subsidizes the welfare department, not poor people.

7. About a year ago, HEW was prepared to employ the National Welfare Rights Organization to disseminate information to poor people about federal programs which might benefit them. This proposal had received program approval all the way up the line. Secretary Finch vetoed the program for what he admitted were political reasons.

8. In response to questions from Senator Long, the Secretary indicated that he would review and change HEW regulations which presently give mothers the right to approve or disapprove of day care arrangements for her child. Such a change would be disastrous in view of the nationwide pattern of the lack of day care facilities required by existing law.

9. Under pressure from state officials, the Secretary has decided to change an HEW regulation which assures welfare recipients of legal counsel in fair hearings. It should be noted that the state welfare authorities never engage in fair hearings without their legal counsel.

Secretary Finch's stand in support of the Cambodian war and of the the Nixon welfare plan while refusing to bring about real welfare reform is one of the major obstacles that must be overcome. Poor people began the case against Secretary Finch and the Nixon welfare plan. It is important that you, our Friend, become involved in the ongoing struggle to provide adequate income for all. There is a bill, S-3780, that has been introduced by Senator McCarthy and sponsored by NWRO which provides an income of \$5500 for a family of four. Secretary Finch and the Senators from your state must see these figures based on Department of Labor data as the minimum amount needed for survival.

Your Friends group can coordinate a visit to your Congressman or Senator in their local offices. Ask if they've read S-3780. See if they know that the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare breaks the law to the detriment of poor people daily. Write letters to the HEW office in Washington D.C. Pressure from poor people in the streets and support from friends across the nation will begin to force priorities for life instead of for death and destruction.

Bread and Justice,

George G. Wiley

George Wiley
Executive Director



ADEQUATE INCOME, DIGNITY, JUSTICE, DEMOCRACY