

DRAFT 5/26/69

To all members of Congress

Dear-----

I am writing this letter of appreciation on behalf of the 200 severely mentally retarded and multiply handicapped who are served by Northwest Center for the Retarded. This is also a plea that the Congress consider additional funding of the Federal Title I program that has been so very helpful to us.

On May 15, 1969, we received a memorandum from Washington State's Title I Mental Retardation Special LIST WHICH was very disturbing. Although the ~~xxxxxxx~~ allocated Title I funds for Fiscal 1969 are roughly the same as for 1968, the money will have to be divided among 45 programs instead of 28. A 50% reduction in Title I funds would seriously jeopardize the quality of the programs we are trying to maintain in the face of almost overwhelming odds. I am quite sure the directors of similar programs all over Washington State feel exactly the same.

Perhaps the story of Northwest Center will illustrate what I mean. We are currently providing programs for the severely retarded from age 3 to young adults in our sheltered workshop. Most of these 200 individuals are literally one step away from the institution. No other community agency has programs for them. Their parents are perfectly willing to have them at home, and as a matter of fact, our programs are much superior to those that the institutions are able to offer. Another aspect of the problem is that the state institutions are cutting the number of residents, trying to encourage more community facilities, and there is no room for "our" children in institutions even should their parents desire it.

The communities are not prepared for rehabilitation and education programs, either in terms of quality programs or the cost of such programs. Thus, Northwest Center has had quite a struggle to keep its doors open for the five years of its existence. To give you an idea of what is needed in the way of money to operate Northwest Center, it costs about \$625 per year to educate a normal child in Seattle, while at Northwest Center our average per capita cost is close to \$2000 per year. Per capita institution cost is a minimum of \$4500 per year. My guess is that we can keep at least 90% of the children we serve in the community.

The spread between \$625 and \$2000 is so great that it is obvious that the Seattle Public Schools are not ready to assume such a burden overnight; thus, the Northwest Center Trustees are coordinating funding from the public schools, the State, Federal grants, parent fees and fund-raising efforts, and private donations. Each fiscal year is a problem, and until we began

to get Federal grants we could not improve the quality of our programs or serve more retarded who are literally sitting at home. The Federal grants buy us time to acquaint local and State agencies with our needs.

Our workshop has been kept going by a three-year Federal grant to train clients. This year a bill was passed in the State Legislature which will subsidize handicapped workers who must ~~also~~ always remain in a sheltered workshop--up to \$1500 per year per client. This covers about 2/3 of our clients (those who are capable of even a small output). We still have to make a program for the other 1/3 who need an activity center and intensive rehabilitation.

Our first Title I grant bought us an Executive Director, a speech therapist (speech problems range from no speech at all to those who can acquire speech with therapy), a bookkeeper, and a pre-school summer program.

Our second Title I grant bought us the salaries of qualified people to continue improving our program--Executive Director, Speech Therapist, bookkeeper and the director of a new program to take care of 20 retarded children who are not eligible for our program run in conjunction with the public schools. The program for these 20 children is so outstanding that we are now in a position to put a great deal of pressure on the Seattle Public Schools to incorporate the methods used in order to improve the public school program.

We are now applying for a new Federal staffing grant to get a school nurse whose duties will be more specialized than those of any regular school nurse, such as helping parents and teachers to toilet train children who would be released from our public school program if they are not toilet-trained by age 8, and testing hearing and eyesight.

We will also be applying for a Title III grant to begin an experimental day care program for schizophrenic-autistic children who are again sitting at home because neither the state nor the city has any program whatsoever for them.

You can see why we are so very appreciative of these Federal grants which help us to provide much needed services to the severely retarded. They are vitally necessary during the transition period while people of good will all over the State of Washington work to find solutions for rehabilitating the handicapped.

We are only one of the agencies here in Washington which is struggling to do a good job. Is there any possibility that more funds will be appropriated during the next fiscal year for Title I programs? We would be very grateful for any assistance you can give us.

Most sincerely,

Evelyn J. Chapman (Mrs. John H.)  
Legislative & Grants ~~V~~Chairman  
Finance Committee member  
Northwest Center parent