

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. There was a request made by Mr. Irwin that some of these gentlemen here with him be given the privilege to speak. Is Mr. Sinclair here?

STATEMENT OF S. MERWIN SINCLAIR, PRESIDENT OF EXECUTIVES OF STATE COMMISSIONS AND STATE AGENCIES FOR THE BLIND, AND PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL FOR THE BLIND

Mr. SINCLAIR. I appreciate very much the privilege which you are giving me here in extending the time of the committee, and I will be very brief.

As members of the State Commission we are interested not only in services for those who are blind but also tremendously interested in the services for the prevention of unnecessary blindness. So we are heartily in support of the three amendments suggested by Mr. Irwin and Mr. Carris, the one referring to the section of the bill on old-age assistance, making this assistance available to blind persons at the age of 50, because of the fact that the handicap of blindness on top of the handicap of age in a great majority of cases makes it a practical impossibility for even an employable blind person of 50 years and over to secure employment.

Secondly, we wish to add our support to what has been said favoring the incorporation of section 702 on crippled children in such a way that the child who is suffering under a serious vision impairment may be included in the services set up for crippled children, or by the addition of a phrase necessary to make this provision for crippled children available for those with seriously impaired vision.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank you very much, Mr. Sinclair. The committee will be very glad to consider the suggestions of your organizations, and these others, and Mr. Irwin.

Mr. SINCLAIR. May I submit a written statement?

The CHAIRMAN. You may, but get it in pretty soon, because we are having these printed very quickly.

Mr. L. L. Watts. Mr. Watts represents the American Association of Workers for the Blind and Virginia Commission for the Blind.

STATEMENT OF L. L. WATTS, RICHMOND, VA., VIRGINIA COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND AND THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF WORKERS FOR THE BLIND

Mr. WATTS. Mr. Chairman, I will not take a minute of your time. I will file my brief with your clerk.

(Document referred to is as follows:)

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF WORKERS FOR THE BLIND,
Richmond, Va., February 12, 1935.

Hon. PAT HARRISON,

Chairman United States Senate Finance Committee,

Washington, D. C.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am appearing before your committee in behalf of the membership of the American Association of Workers for the Blind respectfully requesting that certain amendments which are herewith attached be incorporated in S. 1130 known as the "Wagner economic security bill."

I think the records will show that this is the first time we have appeared, before any congressional committee requesting financial aid for the blind of this country.

Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee, we are well aware that the Federal Government has given financial assistance to practically every group

of our citizens other than the blind. We think that in all fairness the blind should participate and be benefited by some of this Federal legislation. We are citizens of this great country, and it is through no fault of our own that we are blind and while we have refrained in the past from appealing to you for help we do feel now that it is necessary for us to appear before you in order that we may not be overlooked in the future.

I respectfully submit the attached amendments for your consideration and with the earnest hope that they will be incorporated in S. 1130.

Thank you.

Respectfully yours,

L. L. WATTS, *President.*

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO S. 1130

A BILL To alleviate the hazards of old age, unemployment, illness, and dependency, to establish a Social Insurance Board in the Department of Labor, to raise revenue, and for other purposes

CARE OF THE BLIND

SEC. 703. (a) In order to enable the Federal Government to cooperate with the State agencies concerned with the amelioration of the condition of the blind and the prevention of blindness, especially in rural districts, there is hereby appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1936, from funds in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$1,500,000, and there is hereby authorized to be appropriated \$1,500,000 for each fiscal year thereafter. From these amounts so much, not to exceed 5 per centum, as the Secretary of Labor shall find to be necessary for administering the provisions of this section and for investigations and reports related thereto, shall be deducted annually for this purpose, to be available until expended. The remainder shall be allotted to States for purposes of locating blind persons and providing facilities for diagnosis and care of their eye conditions; vocational training, employment, home teaching, and other social service, and to provide special equipment used in the education and employment of the blind: *Provided*, That no portion of such moneys shall be expended for direct, relief, or paid to a blind person, except as compensation for services rendered or as a maintenance subsidy during a period of vocational training; nor shall any portion be paid to any educational institution for the instruction or maintenance of any person under the age of twenty-one. For each fiscal year from the appropriations herein authorized-

(1) The Secretary of Labor shall apportion \$1,000,000 among the States, allotting \$10,000 to *each State, and the remainder to States in proportion to the number of certified blind persons registered in each State: *Provided*, That no allotment made to a State under this paragraph shall exceed the sum of the amount, made available by the State for the purposes of this section and the amount apportioned to it under paragraph (2) of this subsection.

(2) The Secretary of Labor shall apportion the remainder among States unable, because of severe economic distress, to match in full the amounts allotted under paragraph (1) for their use in matching such sums or for special demonstrations of methods of welfare work for the blind.

(b) The sums provided under paragraph (2) of subsection (a) shall be available for expenditure until the close of the succeeding fiscal year. So much of the amount apportioned under paragraph (1) of subsection (a.) to any State for any fiscal year as remains unpaid to such State at the close thereof, shall be available until the close of the succeeding fiscal year for expenditures in that State under the conditions prescribed in such paragraph (1), or, if not requested by the State agency for the welfare of the blind, for allocation to States as provided in such paragraph (2).

(c) In order to receive the benefits of this section a State must, through a State agency concerned with the amelioration of the condition of the blind or, if there be none or more than one such agency, through a State agency designated by the legislature or provisionally designated by the Governor if the legislature be not in session, to cooperate with the Department of Labor under the provisions of this section, submit to the Department of Labor a detailed plan for effectuating the purposes of this section within such State, information concerning the number of certified blind persons resident in the State, and information concerning the amounts made available by the State for the purposes of this section, which should at least equal the amounts made available for similar purposes during the fiscal year next preceding the passage of this act, unless special circumstances can

be shown; and, if an allocation under paragraph (2) of subsection (a) of this section is requested, the conditions leading to such request. A State plan must include reasonable provision for State administration, adequate facilities for locating and certifying blind persons, adequate medical care of the eyes, reasonable provision for vocational training, employment, and home instruction of the blind, and cooperation with medical, health, and welfare groups and organizations. When the Secretary of Labor deems a State plan and the administration thereof to be in reasonable conformity with the provisions of this section, he shall approve the same and send due notice of such approval to the State agency concerned.

(d) For the purposes of this section, a blind person shall be defined to mean one whose vision is insufficient for the ordinary activities of life for which eyesight is essential, such insufficiency of vision to be determined by examination by a regular practicing physician, skilled in diseases of the eye: *Provided*, That such examining physician shall certify in writing the diagnosis, prognosis, and visual acuity of the person examined, and shall state whether in his opinion such person is blind within the meaning of this act and whether there is any likelihood that his vision could be restored or improved by proper treatment, operation, or adjustment of glasses.

OLD-AGE ASSISTANCE

Section 3 to be amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 3. As used in this title, 'old-age assistance' shall mean financial assistance assuring a reasonable subsistence compatible with decency and health to persons not less than sixty-five years of age who, at the time of receiving such financial assistance, are not inmates of public or other charitable institutions: *Provided*, That in the case of a person so blind as to be unable to perform any work for which eyesight is essential, and so certified by a regular practicing physician, skilled in diseases of the eye, the provisions of this act shall apply to such blind person at the age of fifty years.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. Where do you live, Mr. Watts?

Mr. WATTS. Richmond, Va.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mr. Latimer of the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind.

STATEMENT OF H. R. LATIMER, PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND

Mr. LATIMER. Mr. Chairman, if I may I will just speak from here to save your time and mine. In representing the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind, which has 14 local branches working concretely and definitely and closely with individual blind people, I am intensely interested in securing the kind of assistance and cooperation from the Federal Government as will enable us, in some measure, to do the things that we have been so untiring in our efforts to do in the past year.

For 45 years I have been trying to bring the indigent blind people on their feet so as to make them independent of relief of any kind. You are engaged today in trying to solve the unemployment situation as it applies to "seeing" people. We have been engaged, throughout my lifetime, in trying to solve the problem of employment for handicapped people, who are just as sincere and earnest and desirous to meet the needs of their families and themselves. Therefore I want to speak in the utmost support of the three suggested amendments which Mr. Irwin has placed before you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Latimer. I do not know whether the question was asked, but did your committee, Mr. Irwin, or any member of it present this matter to the Ways and Means Committee which is considering this bill in the House?