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Statement to the County Board of Supervisors, October 6, 1969.

CURE appears before you today to urge that the rush to establish a countywide Human Relations Commission be slowed in order to permit the public to become aware of the facts and issues involved and to participate in this most important decision. CURE is part of that public which wants to become informed and to participate. It is less than one week since it was suddenly announced that CIC would not be funded after this month. Though we have known that discussions have been going on between representatives of CIC, the City and the County, the privacy of these discussions, which was appropriate, has nevertheless left us and the rest of the public uninformed of the issues involved. For example, information we were able to gleen indicated that discussions were leading toward a joint powers agreement or similar arrangement that would result in an independent human relations agency. We are now surprised to learn this is not so.

Further, it is not clear at this time what forms a human relations agency may legally take. This is another profound reason to proceed more deliberately.

A primary requisite of a human relations agency is that it have the confidence of the people it serves. In the long run this confidence will depend upon the performance and demonstrated independence and integrity of the agency. But to insure this confidence the agency must in fact be established as independent. Confidence in its integrity can also be inspired by involving the total community in the development of the agency.

Six years ago several groups of citizens in the city saw the need for a human relations agency, and initiated CIC. At its inception few perceived the need. Subsequent events in San Diego and other cities gave tragic evidence of the need. In spite of the limited support given CIC, in our opinion it has done an outstanding job. Because of the nature of its task it would be incredible if it had not generated strong criticism. In fact, if it did not have detractors, we would question its effectiveness. Nevertheless, despite limited support, CIC has developed an outstanding staff which has gained the confidence of important segments of the community. It has invaluable experience, intimate knowledge of local problems, and vital contacts. It is our opinion that it would be foolhardy not to further utilize the talents and experience of the CIC staff and board in the development of the legislation to establish the proposed broader agency.

How should the new agency be developed? The proposal by Supervisor Austin that the black and brown members be ratified by the supervisors, while other organizations appoint representatives outright is patently discriminatory. The proposal by Supervisor Walsh that each supervisor appoint three representatives to an ad-hoc committee which would then develop the human relations agency, while a step in the right direction, still does not involve the active participation of the community in this important first step. Appointments by the supervisors might be perceived as self-protective, rasing the question of the independence of the agency that might result.

CURE recommends that community groups, rather than the supervisors, be asked to appoint members to an ad-hoc committee which would then recommend the organizational structure that the human relations agency should be given. The minority communities must be heavily and strongly represented. In addition there should be representatives from business, labor, education, religious groups, youth, the military, service clubs, civil rights groups, social agencies and government. The supervisors might take the special responsibility upon themselves to appoint outstanding individuals not necessarily associated with any particular group.

As stated previously, CIC should be one of the groups represented. A partial list of others that should be considered is: Community Welfare Council, Urban Coalition, Chamber of Commerce, Urban League, NAACP, Chicano Federation, MECHA-MAYA, NAPA, BSC, BSU, Chicano Legal Defense Fund, League of Cities, San Diego County Labor Council, Japanese American Citizens, Bar Association, City and County schools, police and sheriff departments, League of Women Voters, Parent Teachers Association, EOC, Taxpayers Association, Indian, oriental and Samoan organizations, and the Southeast Ministerial Alliance.

The important point is that the public be involved at once in determining the shape the proposed human relations agency is to take, and the relation it will have to the government.