

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

MICHAEL J. HARRINGTON, 6TH DISTRICT, MASS.
COMMITTEE ON BANKING AND CURRENCY

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April 19, 1971

Mr. Paul E. Healy, City Clerk
City of Cambridge
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Healy:

I wish to thank the Cambridge City Council for their resolution of March 29, opposing any revenue sharing proposals which lack machinery for periodic congressional audit, as well as the safeguards of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

This resolution points out what I consider to be a fundamental defect in all revenue sharing programs including my own General Revenue Sharing bill. My concern over these two questions, particularly the inadequacy of the civil rights provisions has lead me to re-examine my general revenue sharing bill in an effort to strengthen those sections.

Your stipulation of periodic congressional audit raises an interesting question. A simple yearly audit to see that the money has been received and obligated would be relatively easy. However, if by audit one refers to a compliance program, whereby, a check is made not only on whether the money is being spent but how in terms of civil rights compliance, then the problem grows more complex.

What would be the mechanics of an effective compliance program? Is there to be a huge division of compliance officers as part of the Treasury Department to fan out over the country to determine how these federal shared revenues are spent after they are comingled with state and local money? Or is the idea to require simply an assurance of compliance from states that they are distributing the shared revenues on a nondiscriminatory basis?

Mr. Healy

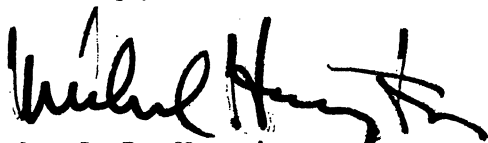
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How is it to be done? It isn't enough simply to say it and have it happen. These are just some of the questions I have been investigating in an attempt to arrive at a workable solution. I have been and will continue to be in contact with various groups and individuals seeking answers to these and similar questions. My office is presently working with the staff of the House Democratic Study Group attempting to set up a symposium or a task force to wrestle with these problems.

Before any measure is passed we will see many variations and much of the formula will prove to be different in one respect or another. Surely this is why hearings are held and why legislation can be amended even on the floor. The critical need, however, is to have the problem fully recognized and proposals out in the open.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Michael Harrington". The signature is stylized with a large, prominent "M" and a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

Michael J. Harrington

MJH:TMM

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Communication from Rep. Michael J. Harrington acknowledging resolution adopted by the City Council on March 29, 1971 opposing any revenue sharing proposals which lack machinery for periodic congressional audit, as well as the safeguards of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

April 26, 1971

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Copies