After the proposal sat on Rumsfeld's desk for months, the new Director of OEO Legal Services, Frank Carlucci, finally authorized funding for Hinds Co. Community Legal Services. CLS will get $200,000 for six attorneys and supporting staff for 15 months; as if anticipating the direction John Maxey's program will go, Ed Cates, city councilman and the Mississippi Bar Association wasted no time in denouncing the grant. Doubtless this formal greeting from these interests is prelude to veto.

Let's fit CLS into the national picture: In California Ronald Reagan vetoed California Rural Legal -- a sort of westernized North Mississippi Rural Legal Services. Probably he will also veto San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Services -- like CLS an urban program. What they all have in common is an independence from the state, and a penchant for advocating grass roots and community organizations.

In California Rural supports Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers; in Mississippi Rural Legal defends poor and black folk. (They have located and trained Mississippians filtering through Ole Miss law school when Rural Legal was a project of the University; many of these young attorneys in fact staff CLS.)

--- CLS gets $200,000 will J BW veto?

Whether Carlucci will override these vetoes will be determined in large part by the quality of support liberals can muster. Rumsfeld, apparently under influence of Nixon's southern strategy, promoted "regionalization," a policy of delegating authority for legal services programs to politically-appointed regional directors. Regionalization was reversed by this coalition of liberals who understand the importance of keeping advocacy groups independent.

But with an election year approaching, and the forces of the Right (including our planters and California growers) well organized, the pressures will be intense to let them die, or to gut them through compromise.

Elsewhere, Cary Hall, Regional Director of HEW, told the Mississippi legislature on Jan. 12 that "federal programs dictated by Washington bureaucrats" had failed. Contacted later, he confirmed that he meant Head Start. Black people were furious, but intimidated by Hall's power to hurt their program; the Mississippi Council countered, after consulting them, "...this attitude indicates contempt for grass roots citizens who control Head Start in Mississippi..."