

CINCINNATI WRC PICKETS DEWINE'S OFFICE

“WHAT ABOUT US?” chanted picketers in front of Sen. DeWine’s office Downtown on September 24. The Cincinnati Welfare Rights Coalition, after weeks of trying to get a meeting with Sen. DeWine, decided enough is enough and took to the streets. “If we can’t get a meeting to sit down and discuss this important issue calmly with him, we will be forced to picket!” stated Lynn Williams. “We *will* draw public attention to the fact that Congress has not passed a bill yet this federal year to reauthorize TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families). The federal fiscal year is set to end on September 30, 2002.”

TANF is a federal program that very poor families (parents with kids only) can get for five years in their whole lifetime. In Ohio the program is called OWF or *Ohio Works First*.

At the picket the building’s security guard told the picketers we would have to leave. He claimed that the sidewalk belonged to the building. When we refused to leave, he threatened to call the police. No one budged, so he called the cops. The WRC was marching proudly and chanting loudly when the police drove up. After Katy Heins, Contact Center’s Director, explained to him what the security office had said, the police officer stated, “It is perfectly legal to protest on a public sidewalk and this is a public sidewalk. Just make sure you don’t block the sidewalk and keep moving in single file.” The WRC complied and we were allowed to continue on with our picket.

The WRC was picketing to urge Senator Mike DeWine to urge his colleagues to pass TANF Re-authorization immediately. At this point TANF Reauthorization is stalled in the Senate. The Federal fiscal year is set to end September 30, 2002. We ask, “What About Us?!!!” What will happen to the millions of mothers and children in America who rely on TANF for cash assistance, child care help and emergency assistance, as well as many more programs that help stabilize poor families? “Now’s the Time, DeWine!” “Pass TANF NOW!”