

need; undesirable, in that the proposed increase in the penalty for such offense will have the result of permitting persons accused of making false reports to demand trial by jury for what in many cases would not be considered a major offense. In view of this, the Commissioners recommend against the enactment of section 508.

The two titles of H.R. 7525 that I have been discussing attempt to deal, in a limited way, with the serious firearm problem which exists within the District of Columbia. Title IV, incorporating robbery in the definition of a crime of violence, has a limited effect on the problem. Section 505, making it mandatory that persons convicted of a crime of violence while armed be given an additional term of imprisonment and be precluded from receiving a suspended sentence or being placed on probation, also has a limited effect on the problem. However, as they have set forth at some length in their report on H.R. 7525, beginning on page 19, the Commissioners are of the view that the bill does not deal with the serious inadequacies in present law regarding the acquisition and possession of firearms. They believe that an appropriate means of dealing with this problem is that set forth in the draft bill forwarded to the Congress by the Commissioners on April 5, 1963. I submit for the record a copy of the Commissioners' draft bill, together with a copy of their letter of April 5, 1963, to the Honorable Lyndon B. Johnson, President, U.S. Senate.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, that will be made a part of the record at this point.

(The document referred to follows:)

APRIL 5, 1963.

HON. LYNDON B. JOHNSON,
President, U.S. Senate,
Washington, D.C.

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: The Commissioners of the District of Columbia have the honor to submit herewith a draft bill "To amend the act of July 8, 1932, relating to the control and possession in the District of Columbia of dangerous weapons, and for other purposes."

The purpose of the draft bill is to reduce the rate of serious crimes in the District by more closely controlling the acquisition and possession of certain dangerous weapons, with particular attention to handguns, which the Commissioners feel are now too easily available to criminal elements in the community.

Crimes committed in the District, as elsewhere in the larger cities of the United States, have been steadily on the increase in the past few years. Many factors play their part in this trend. The Commissioners feel one factor has been the easy availability of the implements of crime and firmly believe that an important step in the direction of reducing the crime rate is to provide tighter legal control over the possession of firearms.

Police records give some indication of the seriousness of the weapons situation in the District. For example, more than 1,250 handguns alone have been confiscated and destroyed over the past 3 years. In addition, police have confiscated other firearms, such as rifles and shotguns, in possession of persons in trouble with the law. The Commissioners are informed that in more than half the cases in which these handguns were confiscated the persons from whom the weapons were taken were charged with assault with a dangerous weapon, armed robbery, or homicide. Recently, the Senate Subcommittee To Investigate Juvenile Delinquency focused attention on the easy availability of the so-called mail-order guns in the District, many of which have been confiscated by District police. It was noted at these hearings by Senator Thomas J. Dodd, chairman of the subcommittee, that an estimated 800 to 1,000 firearms of all types are confiscated in the District each year.

Part of the reason for the general influx of guns into the District, in the view of the Commissioners, is the existence of several serious inadequacies in present law regarding the acquisition and possession of firearms. Accordingly, the attached draft bill is designed to eliminate those features in existing law con-