

tional punishment for committing crimes while armed; and 507 for placing explosives with intent to destroy or injure property, will strengthen the District of Columbia statutes applicable to these crimes and put teeth into our laws comparable to those of neighboring and adjacent States.

The Nation's Capital has acquired, deserving or not, the reputation within the criminal community of being soft on crime. Increasing the minimum and, in some cases, the maximum penalties for these crimes will demonstrate to the criminally inclined that the Congress and the law-abiding residents of the District of Columbia will no longer countenance the situation which has developed over the past decade. The passage of these proposed amendments will be of substantial assistance in correcting the direction of the pendulum of justice in the Nation's Capital.

And I would like to deviate from my formal text for just a few words, if I may.

The CHAIRMAN. Certainly.

Mr. NORWOOD. I am not a lawyer. I am not a penologist, and I have heard a good deal of direct testimony this morning somewhat contrary to what I have just recommended.

My interest, and it goes a little bit beyond the board of trade because I am a past president of the Federation of Citizens Associations, is to protect the law-abiding citizens of our community, and it is our opinion that these changes will assist in doing that.

I recognize that the accused has certain rights but it is our opinion, and it is also the general feeling of the community at large, that the pendulum has swung a little bit too far to protect the criminal and it is just common—I cannot say “common knowledge”—but it is common conversation that the criminal these days has more protection than the innocent.

Some crime figures were just released today, and I think Chief Murray referred to them, that September was the 16th month in succession where the crime rate has exceeded last year's.

The feeling has developed that Washington is soft on crime and that was very well indicated by the case that Chief Murray cited involving a crime here in the District and the man going up to Pennsylvania.

The public is very much concerned about that. Even though Washington is not the highest of the major cities in connection with crime, it is one of the largest and the fact it is not the highest, I think, is rather immaterial because Washington should be a showcase and we certainly are not in the line of crime.

And it is worrying our people.

I was talking to a former District Commissioner the other day about this, and talking about tightening up some crime laws, and he said that—

Well, the people are overconcerned about that; it really isn't as bad as they say, but if the people in the community are concerned about it and the women are afraid to go out on the streets at night, which is a fact—and it is not only confined to women, but it reaches to our diplomats, lawmakers, and the average citizen—something needs to be done about it, as soon as possible.