

Now, secondly, I would say that there is some information that may be needed at one particular place. It may be needed for one particular man or agency, but I would say it is to go to no one else. There are other kinds of information that I would restrict only to the place where it was originally needed and I would have it sealed or destroyed when its usefulness had ended. And I would not assume that information that is useful for one purpose ought to be handed out to anybody else for other purposes.

Every time that information is required, I think it has to be justified all over again. It seems to me a very terrible society—and I mean terrible in the sense of frightening and terrifying—where information given to one man becomes information available to all.

I might very well be willing to talk to a Congressman who wanted to hire a confidential assistant, about some student, but I would never talk to the Congressman if I thought he would tell everybody in the world what he had heard from me. So I think you need a law to protect people against that.

I think you need a third law that would see to it that people have a chance to know what has been said about them and to rebut it.

I am constantly being promised by these letters and references I get that everything I say will be kept confidential, kept from the student.

Why am I entitled to that kind of protection, me as a private individual? Why should I be given the privilege of saying what I please about students and not have to account for it?

Now, in my role as a teacher, I have to account for it. If I give a student a bad mark, I have to see him the next day in the hall and I have to say "I'm sorry. You didn't do very good work." I have to face that and I have learned to face it. Sometimes it's the person you might like best in the class, you feel quite badly about it, but that is something you have to do.

Why should I be allowed to say something bad about the same student in private and get away with it? I don't see that I am entitled to any such privilege and I don't want that kind of privilege, but every one of these letters assures me that anything I say will never be known to the person involved.

I would like to make the accusers in this situation responsible for what they say and I would like to give the individual a chance to explain, to give his side of the story. That way we won't petrify this information. It seems to me that a proposal like this one for a Federal data center is an example of the process by which government "just happens."

I don't think there are bad people in government who want to destroy the privacy of the individual. I think there are very well-meaning people in government who follow their own jobs out to their logical conclusion and see in this certain advantages for efficiency and so forth, and don't see any more. So a center like this is all too likely just "to happen." It is a very great thing, I think, that this subcommittee is trying to make people stop and think. It is trying to make people, it seems to me, ask themselves, "Is this a proposal we really want, or is this, on the other hand, a rather incredible thing in this country that we should have a proposal to have a file on everybody?"