

I guess all that I wanted to say today is simply that we should not permit it to happen. We should have it happen only if we want it to happen. For myself, to those who say that this particular center is necessary, that we have to have this, I would say that what we have to have is a nation of people who are independent and unafraid, and I think that is the only real necessity.

That is the end of my statement. Thank you very much.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Thank you very much, Professor, for your very enlightening statement. It certainly has touched all the bases of our concern.

In behalf of the committee, Professor Reich, we want to thank you for a wonderful contribution to this dialog. I think you have set the basis for some in depth thinking into a problem which disturbs all of us. For your splendid presentation, we are most grateful.

You have touched on many of the things that have concerned this committee in the past. The question of wrong information or bad information becoming institutionalized in Federal dossiers is presently one of the weaknesses of our personnel structure here in Washington. We have had many illustrations of this thing happening now.

The frightening prospect is if this is put into a computer and lasts forever or is made permanent, as you have mentioned.

Only the other day I had a boy graduate from school, an honor graduate, a man about 6 feet 4, who thought he ought to be a Marine officer. It would seem to me he would be the ideal type we want especially since he wants to do his part for the country, being fully qualified physically and academically to be an officer. But shortly before he was to be sworn in, a central traffic data bank turned up the fact that he had 4 parking tickets when he was 17 years of age, and this disqualified him. It showed a certain instability, even though he is now 23 years old and appears to have the right drive to defend his country and get shot at. I do not think that parking tickets ought to be a prohibition to this opportunity.

The frightening part of it was that he subsequently applied to the Navy, who recruited him as officer material, and then it turned up that he was a reject of the Marine Corps and they wanted no part of him.

So you have put your finger on the heart of the problem. We are worried about the dropouts of today, but I am worried about the computer rejects of tomorrow. Within this lies the fact that there will be no opportunity for repentance, rehabilitation, forgive and forget and go on to a happy life, and we are about to change one of the basic and fundamental structures upon which our environment is built.

You have made three suggestions about how we could protect certain taxpayers in the event we get on this path of a central data system. Would you mind outlining those again for the record?

Professor REICH. Surely. Each of these has to be spelled out after hearings, study, and so forth.

First, I think there are questions which nobody has a right to ask any citizen in this country at all—period. I think there are kinds of information that are just plain nobody's business. That is an old-fashioned phrase, but I think it is a good one to remember once in a while. There are just things that are no one's business, and as for those questions, for example, about personal life, habits and ideas, it seems to me we should have a law and eliminate.