

Unfortunately, too often our visitors leave in disappointment and disillusionment. As Vice President Humphrey has said, they come to Washington for education and enjoyment and—

What they do get very often are parking tickets, a feeling of being strangers and intruders, and above all, shabby, cold indifference to their coming here on what truly is a pilgrimage for themselves and their children.

The problems that beset visitors to this city are well known to all of us who have attempted to guide our friends and constituents through the city. Traffic congestion, lack of parking spaces, misinformation, and confusion are problems that face our vacationing visitors. Their excitement and enthusiasm are thwarted by this situation.

We need a Visitor Center. H.R. 12603 offers a plan to provide for the use of portions of Union Station for a National Visitor Center and a parking lot. Passage of the National Visitor Center Act of 1967 would be a great forward step toward making our visitors feel like guests, and not like strangers.

Passage of H.R. 12603 would mean that we could preserve Union Station, which is an unusual landmark in itself. We could have parking facilities within walking distance of Capitol Hill, but it would not be necessary to distort the beauty of the Hill complex. We would have a new railroad station. Our visitors would be able to begin their stay in Washington with a welcome. They could leave their cars, collect information and make their plans at the beginning of the day, in pleasant surroundings and within sight of interested, helpful guides.

We need look only as far as Williamsburg, Va., to see how successful a visitor center can be. For many years, in Williamsburg, the Williamsburg Information Center has made trips to that historic Virginia area more meaningful and more enjoyable for millions of visitors.

Our Visitor Center here in Washington would do more than offer information and a drinking fountain. Silently, it would say, "We're glad you're here. It's your Capital, and your city, and we hope you have a pleasant stay." The Center can make our visitors guests, not strangers.

Financial objections to the development and construction of a National Visitor Center have been met, and H.R. 12603 offers a compromise that should alarm no one. Under the provisions of H.R. 12603, \$19.5 million will be spent by the Union Station owners with no Federal funds involved in construction or renovation. After improvements are made, the General Services Administration will lease the building, and a good portion of the lease payments can be recouped from parking fees and the sale of goods and services.

Today, there are those who worry about the attitude of youth, about world opinion toward the United States of America, about the lack of patriotism in this country.

We have the opportunity to help to make a visit to Washington, D.C., exciting, educational, and inspiring. That's a good place to start an attempt to revitalize national pride. Our Government is the most democratic, most free in the world. Let's allow our visitors to see that.

Again, I want to express my appreciation for this opportunity to appear before the subcommittee, and I want to say that I support the National Visitor Center Act of 1967. This is a good bill, a strong bill. It presents answers to several problems we shall have to solve in the immediate future and, therefore, it deserves early enactment.

Mr. GRAY. Thank you very much, my distinguished colleague, for