

so much you coming back and we deeply appreciate your consideration in appearing here before this committee.

You may proceed in your own fashion.

**STATEMENT OF GEORGE A. AVERY, CHAIRMAN, WASHINGTON
METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT COMMISSION**

Mr. AVERY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to be able to appear.

It was a pleasure to sit and listen yesterday to the fine plans that have been made by the Commission and by the Secretary for the Center.

I am the Chairman of the District of Columbia Public Service Commission, and also Chairman of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Commission, and it is in this latter capacity that I appear before you today.

I would like first to give you some background facts concerning the Transit Commission and concerning some previous Commission actions which involve the subject matter of the bills in question.

The Transit Commission is an agency of the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland, and the Commonwealth of Virginia, created when the three jurisdictions entered into an interstate compact, the Washington metropolitan area transit regulation compact. Congress gave its approval to the District of Columbia to enter into this compact and consented thereto by Public Law 86-794, enacted in 1960.

The purpose of the compact was to concentrate in one agency the regulation of transportation of persons for hire in the Washington metropolitan area.

Succinctly stated, under the provisions of the compact, no person, with certain exceptions which will be discussed later, may engage in transportation for hire in the District of Columbia and its surrounding suburban area, without first obtaining a certificate of convenience and necessity from the Commission and without being subject to the regulation of the Commission with regard to its rates and services.

The primary objective of the legislation you are considering today is to authorize designated representatives of the United States to lease Union Station for the purpose of converting it into a National Visitors Center, with attendant facilities. Our interest and concern with the bills does not involve those sections thereof which concern the Visitors Center, although as a citizen and a resident of the area, I heartily express my own personal approval of the concept. In my official capacity, however, I am concerned only with section 5 of the bills, which contains certain language concerning transportation.

Section 5 does not concern itself solely with the Visitor Center but with the transportation of visitors in the Mall area of the District. Such transportation has been the subject of much discussion and litigation in recent months and you cannot understand the import of section 5 without some knowledge of that litigation. So, I should like to take a few minutes to explain it to you.

In March of this year, the Interior Department entered into a contract with a private concessionaire and to provide transportation on the Mall and instructed their concessionaire that it would not be necessary to obtain a certificate of convenience and necessity from the Commission.