

Mr. Chairman. For one thing, what you are discussing is a very unique situation. There is, after all, only one Capitol and one Visitor Center, and I think everybody recognizes and we certainly recognize, as I tried to indicate in my statement, that the transportation you envisage here is a very good thing and should be provided. If it were provided as free transportation between the Visitor Center and the Mall, I would not regard it as raising any serious problem as precedent for the Commission as for the very uniqueness of the situation that you are dealing with here.

What we are worried about—

Mr. GRAY. On page 3 of your testimony, you say:

While the Interior Department could enter into a contractual arrangement with a concessionaire, that concessionaire must comply with the provisions of the Compact.

So I am looking downstream thinking, well, if we give authority to the Secretary to enter into a contract with the concessionaire and we all feel that we should have free bus service from the Center as far as the Capitol, and then the concessionaire goes to the Commission and asks for that authority, then according to your own statement here, they must comply with the provisions of the compact. The compact may not have any provision for any type of free bus service. Then we run into the situation where Congress has spoken, we feel this is what we should do, give free bus service to the Capitol; and then you come back and make a ruling, we are sympathetic but we feel that this would be setting a precedent where somebody in Alexandria might say, "Well, I think we ought to give free bus service from the courthouse up to some other place in Alexandria, and Congress did it so why can't we do it?"

So I am looking at this from your standpoint as doing a good job with the Commission, that this might set a more dangerous precedent than if we just exempt this particular route from any consideration of the Commission, which certainly would not then set any precedent because Congress is speaking for a specific problem and a specific location, which, as you point out, is unique. We only have one Capitol and we only have one Visitor Center per se.

Mr. AVERY. Well, if I could say two things to that: First of all, if it was strictly free transportation, if there was a separate line going say from the Visitor Center to the Capitol, buses just running on that route and it was free, in the first place, that would not be subject to our jurisdiction, that particular line; because the compact says only that we have jurisdiction over transportation for hire. Of course, if it is free, it is not transportation for hire.

Mr. GRAY. What we have been thinking, frankly, as an incentive to get people out of their cars, was to take a portion of the parking fee and subsidize this leg of the journey. In other words, if we charge, say, \$1 to park for a 24-hour period at the Visitor Center, they can take the stub for that parking ticket and that would be admission to the free bus service. This could be used even for the Capitol employees and other Government workers. If we have off periods and someone here could not find a place to park and wanted to park his car, he could get a free bus ride to work. So we felt that actually it would be really subsidized service.