

**STATEMENT OF MRS. MARGUERITE KELLY, DEMOCRATIC LEADER,
NEAR NORTHEAST, DEMOCRATIC CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, my name is Marguerite Kelly, representing six Democratic precincts in near Northeast. Joining forces with Merle Baumgart, the near Southeast ward leader, we have brought charges through the Democratic central committee against the Safeway Stores.

We have charged them, at some managerial level unknown to us, with a willful deception of the people, by systematically overpricing food in some low-income neighborhoods on the first of the month, when welfare checks are received. Specifically, we found this amounted to a 9.1-percent tax on poverty on September 1.

These charges are documented by the most respected evidence in a court of law: eyewitness accounts.

Before we go any further, let me emphasize that we realize the enormity of our statements. It hasn't been easy for us to bring these charges and, in candor, if I had thought there was more than a remote chance of their truth at first, I'm not sure I would have had the stomach to attack such a big cartel as the Safeway.

It started back in July, when I was cruising my alleys with an aide to Senator Robert Kennedy, checking off housing violations by slumlords. We stopped to talk with one of the key neighborhood leaders—Janie Boyd. Some have asked us since then: "Who is this Janie Boyd?" In 5 years, you will be amazed if anyone should ask that question. She has the greatest potential for grassroots leadership I've ever seen, talents which sprang full-blown 18 months ago when the Democrats had forced public and private parties to clear her alley of an illegal junkyard. Janie Boyd has kept that alley clean and started a block club to do it. Her meetings pull out 40 to 50 people. She began hearing the troubles of her neighbors and, characteristically, she did something about them. She started an emergency food and clothing center for the more desperate and for others who, like ourselves, just needed to stretch their food budget a little further—Janie Boyd did something about them, too. She started a branch of the rapidly growing Capitol Hill Wholesale Buying Club, the cooperative produced by the boycott to cut grocery costs. For the little children this summer, Janie Boyd ran a day camp in her clean, bare alley with a daily enrollment which grew from 75 to more than 100 children. It was here that we heard Mrs. Boyd's charges.

It was a hot day, six blocks from the Capitol itself, one block from H Street NE., where the action simmers year round. A week earlier, the Democrats had intervened to stop a wrecking company from burning a block of condemned houses in the alley at Sixth and G. This was the week that Newark was on fire.

I point this out, because you must know, gentlemen, that we were very conscious of our role, small as it was, to keep our city quiet. We knew that the trickle of city funds and the poor city facilities in our part of town were a major source of unrest, and these accusations of a markup in welfare area stores on food stamp days could have been the final incendiary touch.

So the Democrats did what any of you would have done. We said we'd look into it.

Even this was said with trepidation. We didn't believe the rumors,