

That's all I have.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Thank you very, very much, ladies.

Our next witness is Mr. John O'Brien of the St. Louis Better Business Bureau.

STATEMENT OF JOHN L. O'BRIEN OF THE BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU OF GREATER ST. LOUIS, INC.

Mr. O'BRIEN. I do have some copies of a prepared statement, gentlemen.

Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee, you have the prepared statement to which I have taken the liberty of adding some marginal notes as a result of this morning's hearing.

My name is John L. O'Brien. I am president and general manager of the Better Business Bureau of Greater St. Louis. I live on Washington Avenue, St. Louis, Mo. I have occupied that position since September 1959. For 13 years previously I had a similar responsibility in Akron, Ohio, and prior to that 6 years in Cleveland.

In 1964 I served as a member of the White House panel on consumer education for lower income families under the direction of Mrs. Esther Peterson.

The better business bureau in St. Louis is one of 130 such private, nonprofit corporations, each autonomous in its own community, governed by a board of businessmen directors. Our entire support comes from membership subscriptions from the business community. In St. Louis we enjoy the membership of some 2,400 firms for a total income of approximately \$245,000. Of that amount we have 35 retail and food distribution members supplying \$2,480, about 1 percent of our gross income. Membership in the better business bureau in no way exempts any firm from any action the bureau may take with reference to its advertising or selling, or may any firm exploit the fact of bureau membership in advertisement literature, letters, reference, or in any fashion.

I would like to just read a part of our purpose clause into the record so that we are established. It is quite long here but I will establish the orientation, if I may.

This association is formed for educational purposes, including the following: To promote truthfulness in advertising, buying, selling, and soliciting, to protect the public through public edification against the impositions of those engaged in unfair and untruthful advertising, soliciting and merchandising, and to maintain fair competition and dependability in advertising, soliciting, and merchandising, and so forth and so on. And we accomplish such purposes using methods that are not contrary to the provisions of the constitution or laws of the State.

Now, in carrying out our purpose, we have a staff of 25. Our bureau here in St. Louis is the third largest in the Nation. New York, Chicago are larger in terms of membership dollars and staff than are we. However, we are second in volume of consumer traffic of about 130,000 instances of service per year, exceeded only by Metropolitan New York with a rate of around 200,000, so our consumer impact on the community is substantial. We keep track of the inquiries, complaints, and what we term instances of customer service, customer relations, we