

Mr. WATERS. I think that you, Mr. Erlenborn, and Mr. Brown have raised some important questions.

Mr. BLATNIK. Why do we not wait just a minute, Mr. Waters. We would like to hear you and have your statement in the record.

Will you please take a chair?

Mr. WATERS. Yes, sir.

Mr. BLATNIK. Mr. William H. Waters, a member of the District of Columbia Recreation Board, is appearing apparently on his own behalf and as an individual member of the Board. Is that correct, Mr. Waters?

Mr. WATERS. Yes, sir, Mr. Blatnik.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM H. WATERS, MEMBER, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA RECREATION BOARD

Mr. WATERS. No doubt your staff has prepared information to give you the background which brought into being the Recreation Board back in 1942, an initiative taken here in the Congress—

Mr. BROWN. Mr. Waters, I might say I do not have that background. I do not even have the background on the people who have testified this morning.

Mr. WATERS. Prior to 1942, recreation services in the District of Columbia were administered under divided responsibility; divided between the Board of Education—Community Centers and Playground Department—and the Board of Commissioners, and the National Park Service through the Office of the National Capital Parks. The citizenry at that time, as early as 1937, took such initiative which prompted the Park Service to detail a staff to make a study of this matter. In 1942, Congress passed a Public Law 534 coordinating all recreation services and programs under a single agency, and designating the agency as the Recreation Board of the District of Columbia. The composition of the Board is referred to in the statement submitted by Mr. Hughes this morning.

I think the Recreation Board has served the community admirably. I say this from the vantage point of being a resident of the District of Columbia, by having observed the Recreation Board and its administration for many years. I will in a few days conclude 8 years of service as a member of the Board, 7 of which were in the capacity as Chairman.

It would be an understatement to say that there are no pressing needs for additional recreation service in the District of Columbia. I am not at all certain that these needs and improvement in administration can be better served by abolishing the agency as proposed in this Executive order.

It is astounding to me for Mr. Hughes to make a statement that the District of Columbia Recreation Board is an organizational curiosity. It is also astounding to have Commissioner Washington state that the Recreation Department—referring to the administrative arm of the Board—is not an integral part of the District of Columbia government. It is obvious that the Recreation Board, and its administration, is an integral part of the District government.

The relevancy raised by Mr. Erlenborn and Mr. Brown concerning citizen participation, I believe, is really at the heart of this whole matter. The Recreation Board, certainly more so than the District Building is, in my judgment, closer to the population, closer to the