

renewal, which, in the District of Columbia, is carried out by the Redevelopment Land Agency, is an essential weapon in the District's attack on blight and decay in our community. The President also noted that Members of Congress have repeatedly stressed the need to establish the Commissioner's effective control of all functions essential to local redevelopment, including urban renewal. The reorganization plan is a major step in that direction. And as Mr. Hughes has pointed out, by Executive order the President has already acted to bring the National Capital Housing Authority within the jurisdiction of the Commissioner.

The Redevelopment Land Agency is a separate Federal agency composed of a five-man Board of Directors. Three of its Directors presently are appointed by the Commissioner of the District of Columbia, and two by the President. As indicated in the President's message, although the District contributes one-third toward the cost of urban renewal, the Agency is not required to follow the Commissioner's leadership or administrative direction. I would hasten to add that even though the Agency is not compelled by statute to follow my leadership, the Agency has given me its full cooperation and support on matters of vital concern to the District since our new administration took office. And indeed, Mr. Chairman, I would like to say that, in addition, Mr. Miller and the Board have been particularly gracious since I have been in office. They have permitted me, upon my request, to use their own Director, Thomas Appleby, who is here, as my Housing Coordinator, which gave me a loose umbrella to sort of cover all of the housing agencies and to get them in a tandem operation so that we could develop a capacity to meet this gnawing housing problem. And I certainly want you to know, Mr. Chairman, that this has been a most gracious bit of cooperation and extension of good offices to me and to this city. And I certainly commend them.

However, despite this fine relationship with RLA, it is essential, as the President noted in his message, that the Commissioner of the District of Columbia's leadership role in urban renewal be assured on a continuing basis. The reorganization plan which you are now considering contains two separate provisions which would provide that assurance. First, it would transfer to the Commissioner the authority to appoint the two members of the Agency's Board of Directors who are now Presidential appointees. They would, of course, continue to be subject to confirmation by the Senate. Second, it would transfer to the Commissioner the power of the Agency's Board of Directors to establish rules and regulations governing the conduct of the Agency's business. The reorganization plan authorizes the Commissioner to redelegate this rulemaking authority back to the Agency's Board of Directors. This provision would give the Commissioner a great degree of administrative flexibility, while retaining essential control over the Agency's urban renewal programs.

The principal benefit of the reorganization plan is that it will insure a maximum amount of coordination of urban renewal activities under the Commissioner's leadership, without impeding the Agency's operations. There is probably nothing more fragmented in the city than the housing agencies. I think the Executive order and this step would go very far in bringing all those agencies responsible for an aspect of the housing program within the kind of umbrella that would give us the capacity to reach some of the housing needs.