

Mr. BLATNIK. Thank you, Mayor. We will come back to you with questions.

We will hear now from the Chairman of the District of Columbia Recreation Board and Department, Mr. Thomas. Will you please read your statement?

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM HAMMOND THOMAS, CHAIRMAN, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA RECREATION BOARD AND DEPARTMENT; ACCOMPANIED BY MRS. ELIZABETH M. STERN, VICE CHAIRMAN

Mr. THOMAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. Before I go into my statement, I would like to thank the Mayor for his kind words relative to the Board's work. I can say without equivocation that each member of the Board is a dedicated public servant. Mrs. Stern, Vice Chairman of the Board, is here today and I would like to present Mrs. Stern to the committee.

Mr. BLATNIK. Off the record.

(Discussion off the record.)

Mr. BLATNIK. Certainly the record will show you as part of the panel. We appreciate your making the effort to be here in person.

Mr. THOMAS. My name is William Hammond Thomas, and I appear here today as Chairman of the District of Columbia Recreation Board. I thank you, on behalf of the Board, for this opportunity to present the views of the District of Columbia Recreation Board relative to the President's proposal for the reorganization of the District of Columbia recreation functions, designated as Reorganization Plan No. 3.

The District of Columbia Recreation Board supports the President's Reorganization Plan No. 3.

We believe that the new city government, if it is to have marked administrative success, must have administrative control of all city governmental community service agencies. Moreover, the prestige of the Mayor's office can bring to the Recreation Department the necessary funds to permit the essential upgrading of recreation in this city.

The increased interest in community school complexes envisions cooperative and cohesive educational, recreational, and other neighborhood functions. We believe that the Mayor's office can effect a better cooperative meshing of these community services than can an independent and autonomous board.

While the new Board now in operation has made tremendous strides in the past 10 months toward upgrading recreation services and facilities, it believes that even better and quicker results can be had from the vantage point of the Mayor's office.

While I recognize that this hearing is for the purpose of determining the Board's position relative to the reorganization plan, nevertheless, we would like to read into the record some of our thinking with respect to the future. We believe that there should be a successor board for recreation organized along these lines:

- (1) An 11-man board with agency representatives from the Board of Education, National Park Service, and the City Council. There would be a citizen representative from each of the four sections of the city, a member at large, two youth representatives, and one representative with a strong interest in the arts.