

All right. Our first witness this morning is Rev. Canon Donald A. Griesmann, director of the Episcopal Community Center in Camden, N.J.

Father, I note that you have some witnesses accompanying you. Would you identify them for the record and then proceed with your testimony.

TESTIMONY OF THE REV. CANON DONALD A. GRIESMANN, DIRECTOR OF THE EPISCOPAL COMMUNITY CENTER, CAMDEN, N.J.

Reverend GRIESMANN. Surely. To my right is Mr. Charles Sharp, who is chairman of the Black Peoples' Union Movement in Camden, and other members of the BPUM are to his right and just to the rear; and we have also brought with us from Camden members of the other citizens groups in the city, persons who are in urban renewal projects, persons who are in the pathways of future highways, and members of the staff from the community center. Mr. Sharp will also give testimony if we have the available time, sir.

Senator MUSKIE. Fine.

Reverend GRIESMANN. I wish to thank you for allowing us to come and address you on title VIII of bill S. 698. We feel that this is an extremely important bill and faces some of the critical problems in the matter of relocation for displaced individuals and families.

We strongly support this bill, and in particular its provisions which will bring federally assisted highway construction under the requirements to provide relocation assistance contained in title VIII.

The significance of this provision can be seen in the fact that in the city of Camden during the past 2 years over 1,000 families and individuals have been displaced by Interstate Highway 76. These families did not receive meaningful relocation assistance by the New Jersey State Department of Transportation. We urge the congressional approval of this bill and will make in the process of this report some 10 recommendations.

We have mailed to you press clippings about the most racially tense period in Camden during the past decade and perhaps even further back than that; and essential to this period is the matter of relocation, urban renewal, highway development, and code enforcement. All of these issues confronted the citizens of Camden and the citizens took it upon themselves to handle them because relocation officers were not equipped to do it.

Highway development has displaced more people in Camden than urban renewal has thus far, but we must pair off city code enforcement along with the urban renewal and thus we have some 3,000 people displaced in 5 years. Because of the lack of coordination of government agencies and the lack of a mandate from Congress that the Department of Housing and Urban Development get down to the business of building houses, the frustrations of the poor have grown to a serious and tragic proportion. From coast to coast, from the gulf to Canada, we have seen a great amount of urban development, but very few houses.

The first recommendation we make is a matter of conservation of low-income housing resources. The purpose of this amendment is to make it the official policy of Congress to maintain existing low-income housing resources which are decent, safe, and sanitary.