

Mr. NEGRON. My name is Vincent Negron. I am from Brownsville, Brooklyn, N.Y. I represent an organization called Cusa, Christians and Jews for Social Action, in Brooklyn. I am vice president.

I would like to speak specifically to the housing problem we have in Brownsville, Brooklyn. Many of you here have probably heard and read about the 500 empty buildings we have in our community and about the 10 to 20 buildings a day coming down. The relocation department there is not doing its job, for the simple reason that it relocates people into another, adjacent area which is also a ghetto area. The welfare department—let me verify a little thing.

Brownsville is 85 percent welfare recipient. So you take an individual family, you put it into the East New York section, which is the adjacent area of Brownsville, into another ghetto. The welfare department puts the individual family into this apartment which is just as bad as the one that has already been vacated, or that has emergency vacating orders to be out. The individual does not want them and is then put into a hotel in the city of New York.

Then you have a family of nine, you have kids, you have school that the kids have to attend, and they miss maybe 2 or 3 or even 4 months of school, for the simple reason that they are traveling and they have to ask for a transfer, and you know it is not stable, living in a hotel.

Now, you have the urban renewal areas in Brownsville. You have people knocking down our buildings and moving people into another area again, another ghetto area, putting them again into another dilapidated building with rats and roaches again. Then the people are promised to be moved back into these projects; that is not done.

We have spoken to Chairman Walsh from the housing authority in Brownsville; we have spoken to Mayor Lindsay, we have spoken to everybody down there. We have spoken to Frank R. Collier, commissioner of relocation down there.

We ask that the city of New York and the Senators down here look into this and then build houses at the same moment that you knock one down, to build a brand new one right next door to it or to do something, because what you are doing is moving people from one place to another and creating a ghetto in another area. You cannot move people from one house into another house which is in the same condition.

Last year, we had two babies die of pneumonia. And remember the heat problem we had? We had two babies die of pneumonia. If you remember, you may have read it in the paper, the Times, the Good Shepherd Center housed more than 1,000 people in their church so that the people would not freeze over there because of inadequate heat. The landlord cut out on us and left us in these empty buildings. And then the city takes it over and the city is a worse landlord.

I do not have to tell you this, because we have been demonstrating for the past 2 years. We have been nonviolent in Brownsville. We have not had no riots yet. Not one yet. Now, a month ago, 2 months ago, 25 buildings went up in flames. Nobody got hurt, thank God.

But ladies and gentlemen, let me tell you right now, if this keeps up in Brownsville, we, the people of Brownsville must do something. If the Senators here and the Congress, anybody, you people cannot heed to the message that we are giving you down here today, I feel sorry for this country.