

Then, in addition, the Bail Reform Act, has contributed to court congestion in that there are fewer pleas of guilty. It used to be—when I was in the United States Attorney's office, and this was in the District Court, of course—why, as I recall, 75 or 80 percent of my cases would be disposed of by pleas of guilty. That is no longer the case. I don't know what the percentages are, but there has been a dramatic drop in the number of pleas and that is why you just have to have more judges to handle more trials.

Thank you, sir.

(The complete statement of Thomas A. Flannery is as follows:)

STATEMENT OF THOMAS A. FLANNERY ON BEHALF OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE
ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

My name is Thomas Flannery. I am an attorney in private practice with the law firm of Hamilton and Hamilton. I am appearing today as a member of the Committee on the Administration of Justice of the Judicial Council of the District of Columbia Circuit and as the Chairman of the Committee's Subcommittee on the District of Columbia Court of Appeals and Court of General Sessions. I also appear on behalf of the Washington Metropolitan Board of Trade, having served as counsel for its Committee to Reduce Crime Now and have been authorized by the Board of Trade to reiterate its support of the legislation calling for [more judges] and increased salaries for the judges of the Court of General Sessions.

The Committee on the Administration of Justice was appointed in March, 1966, to study the administration of justice in the District of Columbia, with particular attention to the operations of the judicial system. Every member of our Committee is an attorney actively engaged in the private practice of law and each has had substantial experience before the courts of the District. We have been studying the functioning of these courts for some time now, and in May of last year issued a series of comprehensive recommendations for the improvement of the administration of justice in the District. Our efforts since then have been directed toward implementation of these recommendations as well as further study of the problems facing the District's courts.

Included among these recommendations were proposals to give the judges of the D.C. Court of Appeals, Court of General Sessions and Juvenile Court a \$4,000 salary increase and to provide the Court of General Sessions with 5 additional Judges. Legislation covering these two measures was drafted by the Committee and was introduced in the House by Representatives Broyhill, Gude, Adams, Horton, and Jacobs,¹ and in the Senate by Senators Bible and Tydings.² We have been seeking Congressional action on these and other bills which would implement our recommendations for some time now and are, therefore, pleased that this Subcommittee is giving consideration to H.R. 15678, which provides for the much-needed salary increase.

The importance of the Court of General Sessions in the administration of justice in the District cannot be overstated. This court is currently handling 97% of all litigation in the District, and proposals have been made to transfer still more jurisdiction to it. In the past year the Court of General Sessions handled over 140,000 matters involving landlord-tenant and debtor-creditor relations and provided peaceful solutions to problems which are the most potent source of both private and public unrest and discontent in our community today. Furthermore, the significance of this court, which handles 80% of all serious criminal offenses, to the administration of criminal justice lies not only in the sheer number of defendants coming it, but also in its jurisdiction over many of the offenses that most affect the public. Since most convicted felons have prior misdemeanor records, the likelihood of diverting an offender from a career of crime is greatest at the time of his first brush with the law, and it is essential that the Court of General Sessions have the quality and quantity of judicial manpower to serve this purpose. It is only by attracting men and women of the highest caliber to serve on the local judiciary that the courts will be an effective instrument in dealing with the social and criminal problems facing our city today.

¹ H.R. 12738 and H.R. 13970.

² S. 2439 and S. 1981.