

The District believes it desirable, for reasons of health and safety of the public, that it be required at its expense to remove damaged buildings or parts of buildings which are unsafe within the meaning of the Unsafe Structures Act, and that the owners of real property damaged in the course of the disorders which began on April 4 should not be required to bear the cost of correcting a condition that was not the result of their own acts of omission or commission. However, with respect to properties which, although damaged, are not unsafe within the meaning of the Unsafe Structures Act, the District is of the view that the owners of any such properties should themselves be required to bear the cost of removing such buildings or parts of buildings if that be the course of action they desire to take.

Accordingly, in the belief that the action which the bill requires be taken by the District will eliminate conditions endangering the health and safety of the public, the District recommends the enactment of H.R. 16948, with the exception of so much thereof as would require the District, at the request of its owner, to tear down and remove a building or part of a building which, while damaged, is not in such condition as to be unsafe. In this connection, the District has reason to believe that a number of buildings which might fall within this category could be restored. The District therefore questions so much of the bill as would require it, upon receiving such a request from a property owner, to tear down and remove a building which could be repaired and restored to productive use.

The District accordingly recommends that the bill be amended by striking clause (2) in both subsection (a) and subsection (b); by striking "any buildings so destroyed" in line 3 on page 2 and inserting in lieu thereof "such unsafe buildings"; and by inserting between lines 12 and 13 on page 2, the following: "pursuant to a notice received under the Act of March 1, 1899 (D.C. Code, secs. 5-501 to 5-508)."

These amendments would have the effect of eliminating from the bill the mandatory requirement that the District, upon receiving from an owner of damaged property a request that it be torn down, must take such action, and must remove the debris from all razed buildings, regardless of whether they were unsafe.

The District estimates that the cost of demolishing and removing unsafe damaged buildings or parts thereof will be approximately \$300,000, of which \$100,000 is presently available from funds of the District and the balance of which would be covered by a demolition grant presently being processed through the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

If the bill be amended in the manner suggested in this report, so as to limit its effect to the removal, for reasons of health and safety, of buildings or parts of buildings so damaged as to be unsafe, without at the same time requiring the District also to remove damaged buildings or parts of buildings which are not unsafe, then the District would strongly favor the enactment of the bill.

The Government of the District of Columbia has been advised by the Bureau of the Budget that, from the standpoint of the Administration's program, there is no objection to the submission of this report to the Congress.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Thomas W. Fletcher,
THOMAS W. FLETCHER,
Assistant to the Commissioner
(For Walter E. Washington, Commissioner).

Mr. WHITENER. At this time we will ask our distinguished colleague from Maryland, Congressman Samuel N. Friedel, if he would like to come around and give us the benefit of his testimony.

STATEMENT OF HON. SAMUEL N. FRIEDEL, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MARYLAND

Mr. FRIEDEL. Chairman Whitener and distinguished members of the subcommittee:

I wish to precede my remarks on the pending bill by thanking the members of this subcommittee and your chairman of the full Committee on the District of Columbia, Mr. McMillan, for the considera-