

STATEMENT OF DR. JOHN D. SCHULTZ, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR,
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Dr. SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, the purpose of this Bill is to provide for the protection of the public from the unauthorized and unqualified practice of psychology and from unprofessional conduct of persons practicing psychology in the District of Columbia. At the present time, psychologists may practice in the District of Columbia without license or regulation. The intent of this Bill is to regulate the practice of psychology as existing law already requires the regulation of other professions within this City. We believe that the practice of psychology as is the case with a number of other disciplines, is closely akin to the practice of the healing art as currently defined by statute in the District of Columbia. We believe, therefore, that it is in the public interest to have the practice of psychology defined and regulated and we further believe that it is reasonable to expect that only licensed psychologists should practice their specialty in this City.

In our testimony before the Senate Hearings on this Bill, Mr. Chairman, we recommended certain amendments, which I need not repeat in detail here. These have been incorporated in the Bill, as reported by the Senate Committee, and are identified in Mr. Morse's report of April 23, 1968, on page four, under the heading "Amendments."

I would, Mr. Chairman, like to point out that the amendment to Section 4, page 3, line 18, striking the word "physical" and inserting in lieu thereof the word "medical," has implications which may not be fully recognized. Psychotherapy is a method for the treatment of mental illness, which is a disease of the mind. Hence, psychotherapy is a medical treatment and, therefore, the Bill as amended would require the psychologist who uses the psychotherapy to refer such patients to physicians for diagnosis, thus eliminating the danger of overlooking physical or mental disorders which might affect the mental condition of the patient and mental states which cause physical or mental disabilities. There is danger in authorizing the psychologist to practice psychotherapy without medical referral.

So that there may be no ambiguity in the amendment suggested for Section 4, I would like to offer for consideration the following language:

SEC. 4. The psychologist who engages in practice shall assist his his client in obtaining professional help for all relevant aspects of the client's problem that fall outside of the boundaries of the psychologist's own competence; he shall make provision for the diagnosis and treatment of relevant medical problems by an appropriate, qualified medical practitioner before undertaking psychotherapy.

Mr. SISK. Mr. Moyer and Dr. Schultz, here is what the Chair would like to suggest.

We would like to suggest that you gentlemen be furnished a copy of the proposed amendments or possible substitute bill which you heard discussed this morning. We would like to have your comments at that time.