

Ribicoff Gathers 50 Witnesses for City-Crisis Attack

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*Ribicoff
Hearings*

Sen. Abraham A. Ribicoff (D-Conn.) yesterday disclosed that he intends to submit a broad legislative package to the new Congress dealing with what he called "the problems of rebuilding urban America."

"We're off on our own," the Senator said in an interview. He thus made it clear that he plans to champion the cause of the cities on Capitol Hill next year whether or not he receives backing from the Johnson Administration.

"One of the great problems," Ribicoff went on, "is the tendency of the Executive branch to run the whole show."

While Ribicoff, a former Cabinet member in the Kennedy Administration, did not say so, it was nevertheless understood that the White House has offered him virtually no support for his urban legislative drive.

3 Weeks of Hearings

The Ribicoff proposals will be shaped, in large measure, through a series of public hearings encompassing all phases of urban life that will begin on Tuesday and continue for three weeks.

Nearly 50 witnesses will appear before Ribicoff in the Senate Caucus room—and on television. The hearings promise to serve as the sole legislative activity of any consequence to occur before the new Congress convenes next January.

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capacity as chairman of the Executive Reorganization subcommittee of the Senate Government Operations Committee.

Sen. Robert F. Kennedy (D-N.Y.) is expected to attend the sessions.

The Ribicoff panel held three weeks of hearings last summer on "the crisis in the cities." They produced several abrasive encounters between Kennedy and witnesses, who were drawn mainly from men holding elective or appointive posts.

The current hearing list, released for publication today, leans heavily toward non-governmental witnesses. They come from such diverse fields as private finance and psychiatry.

Tuesday's witnesses will be David Rockefeller, president of New York's Chase Manhattan Bank, and Richard Scammon, vice president of the Governmental Affairs Institute and a former director of the Census Bureau.

The hearings will conclude Dec. 15 with testimony from the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Ribicoff said this will mark the first time that Dr. King has ever testified before a congressional group.

Virtually the entire roster of the Nation's Negro leaders also will appear before the panel. They include Roy Wilkins, executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples; A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, AFL-CIO; Floyd McKissick, national director of the Congress of Racial Equality, and Whitney M. Young Jr., executive director of the Urban League.

Other leading witnesses at the hearings include Walter Reuther, president of the United Auto Workers, AFL-CIO, and McGeorge Bundy, president of the Ford Foundation and a former Special Assistant to President Johnson.