

FBI LOOKS INTO NRA'S ACTIVITIES

Group Denies It Lobbies on Gun Legislation

WASHINGTON (AP) — The FBI confirmed it is investigating the National Rifle Association, an influential group that never has registered with Congress as a lobby.

The NRA, which has fought fiercely against gun-control legislation, contends it is an educational organization and does not engage in lobbying.

An NRA official said, "FBI agents came in here and said they were instigating an investigation at the behest of a member of Congress who was not identified."

He said FBI agents visited the NRA headquarters in downtown Washington last month to inquire about NRA activities.

The FBI said the Justice Department asked for the inquiry. Asst. Atty. Gen. Fred Vinson Jr., the top criminal division official who reportedly made the request, refused to answer questions about the investigation.

Federal law requires all lobbying groups to register with the clerk of the House of Representatives. The NRA, which dates back to 1871, never has done so, contending it is not covered by this requirement.

A spokesman for the association said its officials testify at congressional hearings only by invitation. He said the NRA is defined under tax laws as an educational organization.

The NRA vigorously opposed gun registration and licensing during the battle for stiffer firearms control in the wake of the assassinations of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

The NRA executive board is to meet this weekend and could take action on the lobbying issue, an official said.

Two congressmen are on the board, and 28 others are NRA members. Richard M. Nixon will be the sixth president who has belonged to the group.

Violation of the federal law is a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

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