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Guild Bids Nixon to Act For Press

The American Newspaper Guild (AFL-CIO) urged President Nixon yesterday to repudiate any move by the Justice Department that would subvert basic protections of a free press.

"The announced retreat of the U.S. Justice Department from the advanced position it staked out in its recent series of blanket subpoenas must not be permitted to obscure the threat such demands pose to the right of the public to be served by a free and independent press," the Guild said in a statement.

Guild President Charles A. Perlik Jr. said the union would fight any attempt by employers to discipline newsmen for resisting what he called infringement of their legitimate activities.

The Guild, said Perlik, would continue to oppose challenges to newsmen's right to refuse to reveal confidential information.

In Palm Springs, Calif., meantime, Dean Burch, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, expressed approval of the Justice Department decision not to subpoena notes and tapes of newsmen for cases against Black Panthers.

"You ought to be able to stick those notes in your pocket and forget them," Burch told a convention of California Broadcasters Association.

The Justice Department originally had issued subpoenas for news organizations' files dealing with Panthers.