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# Philly Editor Attacks Curb On Crime News

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — William B. Dickinson, president of The Associated Press Managing Editors Association, declared Tuesday restrictions on pretrial news coverage proposed by an American Bar Association study group "would deny the public information regarding crimes to which it is entitled, and which it must have."

Dickinson, managing editor of The Philadelphia Bulletin, said the Bar Association's suggested code of silence for judges and lawyers "could be used to cover up secret arrests, and, indeed, secret trials."

He added that members of the APME Executive Committee had approved the statement.

A bar association study group of 10 prominent judges and lawyers recommended the code of silence after a 20-month study. The code would forbid law enforcement officers or lawyers to disclose, among other things, whether defendants in criminal cases had police records or had confessed.

The bar association proposals were criticized earlier by Robert C. Notson and J. Edward Murray of the American Society of Newspaper Editors and D. Tennant Bryan, chairman of the Committee on Free Press and Fair Trial of the American Newspaper Publishers Association.

In his statement Tuesday Dickinson said:

"A committee of the American Bar Association, of which only 46 per cent of the nation's lawyers are members, has published a report making specific recommendations which it believes would, if adopted, insure fair trials for persons accused of crimes. The report proposed that a 'rule be promulgated in each jurisdiction by the appropriate court' which would, among other things:

"1. Forbid police and other law enforcement officers, from the time of arrest of an alleged criminal until completion of his trial, to give any information regarding, not only his prior criminal record, if any, but also his entire prior history;

"2. Forbid any revelation as to whether the accused has made any statement, either admitting guilt or asserting innocence; and

"3. Forbid any report of results of examinations or tests of the accused person, or any agreement or refusal of the accused to undergo such tests.

"The Associated Press Managing Editors Association does not question the right of lawyers to establish standards for lawyers, although the bar has not always been quick to disbar or censure those of its members who have failed to conform to

existing codes of ethics. It is a far different matter, however, for a minority of the nation's lawyers to take it upon themselves to propose rules for police and other law enforcement officers who are paid by the public.

"These suggested rules, if promulgated as proposed without any prior public approval, would deny the public information regarding crimes to which it is entitled, and which it must have.

"In instances where the police or other law enforcement authorities are corrupt, these rules could be used to cover up secret arrests and, indeed, secret trials, since the lawyers also wish to bar the public from preliminary hearings and from any portions of trials which do not take place in the presence of the jury.

"The members of The Associated Press Managing Editors Association have full confidence that the judges of this country, who are accustomed to taking the longer view, will continue to hold that the First Amendment, guaranteeing the people's right to know, and the Sixth Amendment, guaranteeing an accused person's right to a fair trial, are equally important, and that they will refuse to implement these recommendations.

"The editors who are members of APME expect, in any case, to continue to cover the news, and to report it accurately and responsibly."