

House Changes SACB Name, Widens Power

By Mary Russell
Washington Post Staff Writer

The House voted yesterday to change the name of the Subversive Activities Control Board and give the President power to expand its duties even beyond the Executive Order he issued last year.

By a vote of 226 to 106, the House decided to call it the Federal Internal Security Board and authorized the President to have it hold hearings on the character of organizations related to federal employee loyalty.

This is essentially what President Nixon did by Executive Order last year, but the order defined what activities and associations might put an organization on the Attorney General's list.

This bill eliminates these limitations and allows the board to investigate any organization the President might find "relevant."

In the state, the measure is expected to meet stronger opposition.

The bill voted yesterday was recommended by the House Internal Security Committee in

an effort to codify legislatively the Executive Order and at the same time to avoid challenges to its constitutionality.

The Executive Order was challenged last year in federal court. The judge, while dismissing the suit, indicated that if enforcement of the order was ever attempted he would set it aside for vagueness and the doubtful constitutionality of the President's giving the board responsibilities other than those specified when it was created by Congress.

Sponsors of this bill, led by Rep. John M. Ashbrook (R-Ohio), attempted to avoid the question of other responsibilities by broadening legislatively what the President could do.

In opposing the Ashbrook bill, Rep. Don Edwards (D-Calif.) said, "The bill . . . authorizes the President to order SACB hearings and finding on any organization or association in the country. A citizen could innocently have joined some club in his youth and 25 years later that club could be declared subversive by the SACB. So he loses his job."

Opponents of the bill, including Americans for Democratic Action and the American Civil Liberties Union, doubt that even in its new form it is constitutional.

By a voice vote, the House rejected a proposal by Rep. Richardson Preyer (D-N.C.) that would have repealed the 1950 Subversive Activities Control Act and establish a Federal Employee Security and Appeals Commission in place of the SACB.