

Goodell Asserts Amnesty Plan Should Be Revived and Widened

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By RICHARD D. LYONS JAN 16 1976

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 15 — Charles E. Goodell, former chairman of the Presidential Clemency Board, called today on President Ford and Congress to reopen and widen the program to aid Vietnam war resisters and draft evaders.

He noted the sharp rise in the number of applicants for the program in the last two months of its life of six and one-half months and said that if the program were reopened, many more men would apply. The application period ended last April 1.

At a news conference here, Mr. Goodell termed the program a limited success, even though, he said, the number of applicants was held down by public relations problems and bureaucratic delays.

"Many of those persons eligible for the program thought that it was intended to benefit only those who had gone to Canada, when it was far broader than that," he said.

Some liberal groups have been critical of the clemency program, contending that its benefits were made available to only a small fraction of hundreds of thousands if not several million Americans who are still in legal jeopardy because of their antiwar activities in the nine years of the Vietnam conflict.

"It is unfortunate that only 16 percent of those eligible for the Clemency Board program were able to take advantage of it," Mr. Goodell said. "The evidence strongly indicates that most of those who failed to apply did so because they never realized they were eligible to apply.

"Therefore, I urge the Congress to enact a conditional clemency program similar to the one which is now over."

But he said that he did not support a bill now before the

House Judiciary Committee that would reduce further the legal liabilities of men who did not register for the draft, deserted their military units or went AWOL. The bill would give almost unconditional clemency to anyone in these groups who chose to sign a declaration that he was against the war.

"This would be an open invitation to lying," Mr. Goodell said.

Asked about the possibility that a minority report would be filed by the four men on the Clemency Board who had declined to sign the 19-member board's official report to the President, Mr. Goodell said that if there was such a minority report, "I have never seen it."

Late last year, the four members stated publicly that the board was being too lenient to applicants for clemency.