

PRESS

SFChronicle

DEC 23 1972

# ACLU to Fight Nixon's News Media Proposals

The American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California announced yesterday it will vigorously oppose President Nixon's proposed legislation to "correct balance" on television news broadcasts.

"We have been forced into the incredible situation where we must now lobby for the First Amendment," said Jay A. Miller, executive director of the ACLU here.

The proposed administration legislation, disclosed Monday by Clay T. Whitehead, Mr. Nixon's director of telecommunication policy, was described as the latest onslaught against the news media that was begun in the early years of the Nixon administration.

## BAD

"There has been bad news the last ten years — news of war in Vietnam, explosions in our ghettos and other unpleasant matters that no one likes to hear about, said Miller.

"The bad news didn't start with the Nixon administration, but what did start was an attempt to curb that news."

## RESPONSIBLE

Miller said the ACLU in Northern California will work closely with the national ACLU to defeat the television news "balance" bill when it turns up in Congress.

"Local television stations

would be held responsible by the government for 'balance' in national news that comes from the networks," said Miller. "Whitehead said that those who fail to act to correct balance or who 'acquiesce by silence,' will be held fully accountable at license renewal time.

"The economic stakes here are very great for a station operator and the networks."

## BILL

Miller declared the ACLU will also become active in the fight to guarantee reporters the right to protect their news sources.

The organization favors federal legislation sponsored by two California Democrats, Senator Alan Cranston and Representative Jerome Waldie, and also will ask Governor Ronald Reagan to sign legislation tightening California's immunity law.

"If the threats to unhampered news gathering and dissemination which we are witnessing go unchallenged, every citizen will be deprived of his right to information, and when that is gone, all other rights are in jeopardy," said Miller.

"It is as though we are



JAY MILLER  
'An incredible situation'

going back to ancient times, when the Greeks warned citizens against the bearer of bad news, and Romans killed him."