

## Publishers Group Urges Shield Law

New York

The American Newspaper Publishers Association called yesterday for federal legislation to protect reporters from having to disclose their news sources.

Protection of confidential sources was the main topic of discussion at the final session of the 87th annual meeting of the publishers.

Len H. Small, chairman of the association's government relations committee, told the newspaper executives that the association is supporting the shield law bill sponsored by Senator Edward M. Kennedy (Dem-Mass.) and Alan M. Cranston (Dem-Calif.).

The bill is generally considered the most far-reaching of the many proposed shield law bills because it would give newsmen absolute protection from testifying about their news sources and would apply to federal and state courts.

Small said his committee felt that there should be one pre-emptive law instead of individual state laws so that reporters would not be in the position of being protected in some states and forced to testify on the same information in other states.

The discussion about the necessity for a shield law came as a result of a Supreme Court ruling last June that newsmen have no inherent constitutional right to defy subpoenas. Before that it had been assumed that newsmen had this right under the First Amendment.

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