

IDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1972

NYTimes

DEC 22 1972

*Letters to the Ed:***The A.C.L.U.'s War on Secrecy**

To the Editor:

Two Nov. 25 Op-Ed articles, by John Gardner and M. L. Stein, lamented the failure of Federal and state freedom-of-information statutes to reduce effectively the level of secrecy in Government. An article by Felix Belair Jr. (Nov. 22) showed that President Nixon's six-month-old Executive order on Government classification has failed to ease access to such classified data. Your readers may be interested to learn that the American Civil Liberties Union has launched a concerted campaign attacking this very problem.

On Nov. 11 the A.C.L.U. Foundation filed twin lawsuits in Federal court in Washington to crack unwarranted Government secrecy by implementing the Freedom of Information Act of 1966. One lawsuit seeks a court order to open the "Hiss-Chambers" files. The other asks an order to open records of the forced return to the Soviet Union of anti-Communist prisoners of war after World War II. Each lawsuit was brought on behalf of well-established scholars who wish to conduct research on the subjects of these files.

The two lawsuits are part of an A.C.L.U. litigative and educational campaign against Government secrecy.

Pending A.C.L.U. legal actions include proceedings to compel the release of Army and Navy death reports to the families of deceased servicemen; a request on behalf of a Wisconsin farmer for information about prospective land purchases by the Federal Government for a national park; a challenge to the prohibitive charges Federal agencies levy for reproducing documents when their release has been compelled under the F.O.I.A.; a suit to

obtain summaries of disciplinary proceedings at the U.S. Air Force Academy, and an appeal pending in the United States Supreme Court involving release of environmental impact statements on nuclear testing, in which the A.C.L.U. is participating as *amicus curiae*.

In several recent administrative proceedings the A.C.L.U. has already secured the release of a wide variety of Government documents, including a study of Vietcong indoctrination practices prepared for the Department of Defense; an Affirmative Action Program for the City University of New York submitted to the office of Civil Rights of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare; a statement of experimental criteria used by the United States Parole Board in making parole decisions; exhibits submitted to the Army Discharge Review Board in an administrative discharge hearing; a Department of Defense study of chemical warfare, and a technical study of a new film projector developed by the Army.

The A.C.L.U. is also producing a pamphlet that explains that "freedom of information" is essential to the people's "right to know" what their Government is doing and has done "so that they may decide intelligently what their Government shall do in the future." The pamphlet tells citizens exactly how to use the F.O.I.A. most effectively. It will be available to the public shortly.

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New York, Nov. 27, 1972