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HOUSE HOLDS UP CODE OF EVIDENCE

Imposition of New Rules for
Federal Courts Delayed

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WASHINGTON, March 14 —

The House voted overwhelmingly today to postpone indefinitely the imposition of the Supreme Court's controversial new rules of evidence for the Federal court system.

By a 399-to-1 margin, the Representative agreed to give Congress as much time as it needed to rewrite the evidence code and then enact it as a regular law. Senate concurrence appeared assured with the support of Sam J. Ervin Jr., Democrat of North Carolina, sponsor of a similar move in the Senate.

The lone dissenter was Representative Harold V. Froelich, a freshman Republican from Wisconsin.

During an hour of debate, other members questioned what should be included in the final draft of the rules and what should not, but almost no one argued against delay.

If the Senate does not take similar action, the Supreme Court's rules will go into effect automatically, either on May 6 or July 1, depending on the unresolved question of whether the enabling statute or the Court's order accompanying the rules takes precedence.

Provisions of Code

Among controversial provisions in the code that was sidetracked today are the creation of a new "secrets of state" security classification system, new exceptions to the rule against hearsay and the aboli-

tion, for the purposes of Federal court testimony, of the confidential status of conversations between husband and wife and doctor and patient.

The House action represented a personal victory for Representative Elizabeth Holzman, the 31-year-old Brooklyn Democrat who unseated Representative Emanuel Celler last year. She sponsored the delaying law that was approved today and made her first floor speech in support of it.

Representative William L. Hungate, Democrat of Missouri who is chairman of the House Judiciary subcommittee that is charged with reviewing the code, pledged that the project would not be "pigeon-holed" as a result of today's vote. He said that his group would produce a revised code before July 1.

Underlying Congressional objections to the evidence rules has been a growing conviction that the code represented intrusion by the judicial branch in an area of law that is the responsibility of the House and Senate.

The Congressional move to delay the evidence rules received support from the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press. In a letter to Senator Ervin, the group objected to the code's not providing for a newsman's privilege to keep sources confidential and its inclusion of new security classifications for Government information.