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Senate Votes to Repeal No-Knock Drug Law Rule

By United Press International

WASHINGTON, July 11 — The Senate voted 64 to 31 today to repeal the controversial "no knock" provision in the Federal drug laws.

An amendment to strike the provision from the law was added to an \$875-million authorization measure that was passed to extend the life of the Drug Enforcement Administration for five years. The legislation must now be approved by the House, where its prospects are uncertain.

The statute, enacted in 1970, authorized Federal narcotic agents and District of Columbia policemen to obtain court warrants to forcibly break into an individual's home or office where narcotics were suspected to exist.

Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., Democrat of North Carolina who was sponsor, said the law violated "the privacy of the individual and the sanctity of his home." He said the provision's effect over the years has been "to sanction the methods of a common burglar."

Sees Curb in Warrants

But Senator Roman L. Hruska, Republican of Nebraska, argued that the law had been "sparingly used" by narcotics agents and that it was a "valuable tool" to combat drug traffickers.

Senator Hruska said the law was tempered by the requirement that agents must first obtain a court warrant before making any drug arrest entries.

"There has to be a balancing between law enforcement and personal rights," he said.

Senator Gaylord Nelson, Democrat of Wisconsin, called the no-knock provisions "unnecessary, dangerous and unconstitu-

tional," and said, "Numerous reports have documented how Government agents have abused 'no-knock' authority to break into homes and terrorize unsuspecting and even innocent individuals."

Sen. Charles H. Percy, Republican of Illinois, said the law was "an invitation to official lawlessness." He said narcotics agents "have sometimes used police state tactics in making unannounced and unlawful entries of decent, law-abiding citizens."

Senator Percy gave, as an example, the raid by agents on two homes in Collinsville, Ill., in April, 1973. It was later determined that the agents had broken into the wrong homes after a search of the residences had been completed.