

## Signed by Governor A Right to Silence Bill Giving Newsmen

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Governor Rockefeller signed what he called "the freedom of information bill for newsmen" here yesterday, saying that it "clearly protects the public's right to know and the First Amendment rights of all legitimate newspapermen, reporters and television and radio broadcasters."

The Governor said the new law, which is an amendment to the state civil rights law, would protect "journalists and newscasters from charges of contempt in any proceeding brought under state law for refusing or failing to disclose information or sources of information obtained in the course of gathering news for publication."

He cited the case of Earl Caldwell of The New York Times, who has been subpoenaed to testify before a Federal grand jury that has been investigating the Black Panthers. The Governor noted that a Federal judge in California has ruled that compelling Mr. Caldwell to testify might "seriously impinge upon or repress the First Amendment rights of freedom of speech, press and association."

The Governor also signed a special bill authorizing the New York City Board of Higher Education to provide a pension for 73-year-old Dr. Arthur J. Kraus, who was vindicated earlier this year 37 years after he was dismissed from City College for conduction a hunger strike against Fascism in Poland.

Thornton G. Edwards, a Buffalo lawyer, was sworn in at the bill-signing ceremony as chairman of the new state mortgage agency, which will be run by a board of five directors, including Mr. Edwards, State Controller Arthur Levitt and State Superintendent of Banks William T. Dentzer. The other two directors will be named by the Governor shortly, he said. The agency will have its headquarters in Buffalo.

### Backed by Mitchell

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 12—Attorney General John N. Mitchell said tonight that he would accept a Federal law "guaranteeing the confidentiality" of a reporter's notes or television film.

Speaking on the "60 Minutes," program of the Columbia Broadcasting System, Mr. Mitchell said that such a law "might in some instances impair the administration of justice," but that "the confidentiality of the activities of reporters would add to the dissemination of news and it would add to the type of news that is disseminated, and I think in the long run, in balance, that might be for the benefit of our community and society."

In recent months, the Justice Department has subpoenaed reporters to disclose their unedited files on the Black Panther party.