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'Invasion of Privacy'

Data Banks Suit Filed by ACLU

Attorneys for the American Civil Liberties Union here have filed what they call a "landmark" suit to prevent "computer invasion of privacy."

Charles Marson, ACLU staff counsel, said the suit was filed Friday in Superior Court on behalf of social workers Josephine Belmont and Glenda Pawsey.

The two women were disciplined by the State Department of Social Welfare after they refused to disclose confidential information about welfare recipients for inclusion in a computer data bank, Marson said.

The women were prevented by professional ethics

from disclosing the information without assurance of limitation on access to the data, he said.

Marson said he will argue that such a data bank is an invasion of privacy. "If we win," he said, "there will be grounds to sue federal, state and local governments on the theory of invasion of privacy wherever they operate data banks without adequate safeguards for privacy."

He said he expects the losing side to appeal, possibly all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Superior Court Judge Ira A. Brown has set next Monday for a hearing on the case.