

Group Protest Subpoenas Of Phone Call Records

Washington

The National Newspaper Association (NNA) called on the government yesterday to stop issuing subpoenas to obtain records of reporters' telephone calls.

In letters to the Justice Department and American Telephone and Telegraph Co., the group described the subpoenas as a "very dangerous invasion of privacy."

"If allowed to continue, it can lead to an unhealthy situation in which government agencies can use telephone records to inhibit the free flow of information," said Jonathan Marshall, chairman of the NNA's Freedom of Information Committee

and publisher of the Scottsdale, Ariz., Daily Progress.

Marshall insisted that the records of telephone calls by reporters and editors should remain confidential.

If the practice continues, he said, the NNA will urge Congress to pass a law protecting the privacy of such calls.

"If this invasion of privacy is allowed to continue," he added, "the next step could well be government monitoring of private calls, and this would be a serious threat to our democratic freedoms."

The NNA represents more than 6500 daily and weekly newspapers.

United Press