

Bar Group Urges Presidential Curbs

Philadelphia

The American Bar Association, in the legal profession's first organized response to the Watergate scandal, called on Congress yesterday to enact a package of legislation to insulate the government's law enforcement agencies from political influence.

Without dissent, the ABA's policy-making House of Delegates said new laws are needed to prohibit the President from appointing his campaign directors, political party officials or anyone else actively involved in his election to high-ranking positions in the Justice Department.

Similarly, to keep the department and the White House at arm's length, the ABA recommended that the attorney general and his chief deputy be barred from active politicking and from advising the President on "personal and partisan matters." Such counsel, the ABA agreed, "should be provided

by sources outside" the department.

With Watergate in mind, the ABA also endorsed legislation authorizing the appointment of a temporary special prosecutor whenever an attorney general becomes the subject of a criminal investigation. A special prosecutor should also be deputized, the ABA said, whenever the attorney general's impartiality was questioned because a criminal inquiry hit close to other administration officials or to his personal associates.

In other sections of the law enforcement package approved yesterday, the ABA recommended that the director of the FBI be confined to a fixed term in office and called for stepped-up scrutiny of the FBI.

The ABA House of Delegates narrowly refused to endorse efforts by women's groups to repeal laws against prostitution.

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