

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

22 East 40th Street New York, N.Y. 10016 (212) 725-1222

Dear Member:

How's this for a dirty trick?

Between 1956 and 1974, several hundred thousand men and women who got honorable discharges from the armed forces had secret codes on their discharge papers. These codes labeled them as "unsuitable" or "apathetic" or "bed-wetters" or as having "homosexual tendencies." The codes, which sometimes punished political activism, were secret from the veterans marked by them. However, they were well known to the personnel departments of many major public and private employers.

ACLU discovered the meaning of the codes about 15 months ago. We made the codes public and started a campaign to eliminate them. Several members of Congress joined us in denouncing the codes. And in February, we won the first federal court decision restricting their use. Six weeks later, on March 22, the Defense Department caved in. The codes will no longer be used. Moreover, any veteran with a bad code on his discharge papers can turn them in and get clean papers in exchange.

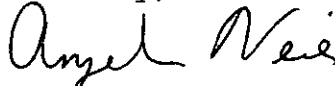
We're not satisfied. ACLU has demanded that the Defense Department try to reach all veterans with bad codes on their discharge papers and offer them clean papers. After all, if General Motors can be made to recall defective cars, why can't the Defense Department be made to recall defective discharge papers?

ACLU is making an attack on coded records, dossiers and databanks a major focus of our work. A lot of people are being hurt by records they don't even know about. In these post-Watergate days, this focus has a lot of support. But we need your help to make the effort.

If you could make an extra contribution now, it would be a great help. ACLU has been feeling the economic pinch. Our costs are way up and increased contributions are not keeping pace with inflation. An extra contribution would be deeply appreciated; your contributions make possible everything we do.

Thanks.

Sincerely,



Aryeh Neier
Executive Director

P.S. Please see other side.

To try to make sure that people can protect their own rights, ACLU is publishing a series of books advising people what rights they have and how to protect them. Eight books in the series are now available. If you respond to this letter with a contribution of \$10 or more, we'll send you the book of your choice free of charge. Send \$20 or more, and take your choice of 2 books. Send \$50 and, if you wish, we'll send all eight. Even if none of the books would be helpful to you, you can help us put them into the right hands. Someone you know can use a copy.

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