

September 10, 1974

Dear Friends:

I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and to urge you to take two very important actions before Congress adjourns for the year. I am Esther Herst, the new coordinator of the Washington office of the National Committee Against Repressive Legislation. For the past three years, I have been the associate director of the Midwest Office of NCARL and I have spent time in Washington both as an intern under Dr. Donna Allen and as coordinator for the Illinois Impeach Nixon Committee Washington delegation. I hope to keep you up-to-date on civil liberties developments in Congress through newsletters and action bulletins and I also hope that if you have any questions or concerns about pending legislation, whatever the area, you will feel free to use me as a resource.

Congress faces two major civil liberties votes as it reconvenes this fall. For the first time since 1945, the future status of the House Internal Security/ House UnAmerican Activities Committee will be considered on the floor of the House of Representatives. The vote will be in the form of a committee reorganization plan (H. Res. 988) authored by a bi-partisan select committee headed by Rep. Richard Bolling (D.-Mo.) which recommended the elimination of HISC and the transfer of its jurisdiction and mandate to the Government Operations Committee. Unfortunately, this may well have the effect of institutionalizing the 754,000 dossiers and the witch-hunting practices for which HISC has long been known and, in fact, could breathe new life into those practices. NCARL much prefers a substitute recommendation from the committee of the Democratic Caucus, chaired by Rep. Julia Butler Hansen (D.-Wash.) which assigns jurisdiction over internal security matters to the Judiciary Committee. We view such a move as a welcome first step in restoring the constitutional guarantees of free speech and association in the work of the House.

Will you please write to your representatives to support the Hansen committee amendment to H. Res. 988, as it applies to the House Internal Security Committee? You might indicate that this would be a very effective way for Congress to act on the concern for safeguarding our fundamental freedoms expressed during the impeachment proceedings.

The second civil liberties issue before Congress is repeal of the No-Knock statutes of the D.C. Court Reform and Criminal Procedures Act and the Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act. In July, the Senate voted 63-31 to repeal No-Knock by an amendment to a U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration appropriations bill. The House voted on August 12 to repeal No-Knock for the nation but NOT for the District of Columbia. The matter will go before a House-Senate Conference Committee as soon as the House chooses its conferees. Mail to all representatives and especially to members of the D.C. Committee calling for TOTAL REPEAL is urgently needed. Remind your congressmen that residents of the District are entitled to the same constitutional protections guaranteed to the rest of the nation.

Thank you for your support for our civil liberties work. As you know, your financial assistance as well as your letters to Congressmen will enable NCARL to keep up the struggle against repressive laws and in defense of our Bill of Rights. Your contributions are deeply appreciated.

If I can be of any service please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



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NATIONAL COMMITTEE AGAINST REPRESSIVE LEGISLATION

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