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Information Bill Held in Doubt

re: S.774

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 20 — The chairman of the House subcommittee reviewing a Senate proposal to modify the Freedom of Information Act predicted today that it would not reach the House floor this year.

Representative Glenn English, Democrat of Oklahoma, chairman of the Subcommittee on Government Information, Justice and Agriculture, said in an interview that the proposal was "too controversial" to be reported out of the subcommittee.

The proposal supports Reagan Administration efforts to sharply limit the availability of law-enforcement files for public view. It would also impose what could be high fees on individuals seeking information from Government agencies, extend time limits for agency responses to requests for information, and permit businesses to at least temporarily block the release of information about them.

Mr. English said the subcommittee might propose a "less controversial" bill this year, possibly containing a business review clause which has the support of various industries.

Today, representatives of business, academic, and research institutions criticized the bill at a hearing.

Athan G. Theoharis, a history professor at Marquette University in Milwaukee, said the bill, "in the guise of fiscal responsibility and agency efficiency, will discourage use of the act while permitting agencies to withhold documents which should properly be in the public domain."

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