

Changes to limit public information

# Proposed FOIA revision blasted

United Press International  
OKLAHOMA CITY — An Oklahoma congressman criticizes what he calls the Reagan administration's meat ax approach to amending the Freedom of Information Act. Rep. Glenn English, D-Okla., he was concerned not only President Reagan's attempts to amend the law, but, also by what he interpreted as other administration efforts to place a clamp on public information. English, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Government Information and Individual Rights, said one of Reagan's proposals to amend the FOIA could cause delays of as much as 18 months in obtaining public information. "How much information is its value over 18 months?" English said. "How many re-

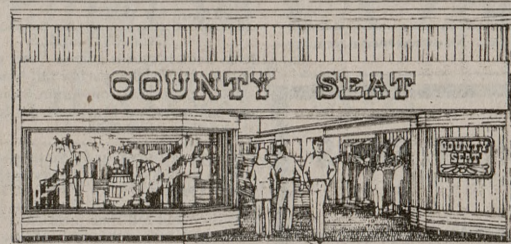
questers will have such patience? "Some changes may be appropriate, although the law must be approached with a scalpel rather than a meatcleaver." English appeared Saturday before the Oklahoma Press Association's midwinter convention, which concluded Sunday. "You should also be aware of other information-related activities of the Reagan administration," English told editors. "In addition to proposing changes in the FOIA, the administration is working on a revision of the Executive Order under which information is classified. You will not be surprised to learn that the administration wants to expand the amount of information that is classified. "The trend of these changes is quite disturbing. I don't know if there is a deliberate program to

limit the public's right to know, but that is the effect of many Reagan administration decisions. I don't understand why a conservative administration that wants to return power to the states and the people is cutting off the flow of information that is necessary to manage that power. "I don't understand why the ability of the people to find out what the government is doing needs to be diminished. "The administration's attempts to control media access to agencies have received a lot of attention. Apparently the lie detector will be a new weapon in the battle against leaks. "In other areas, agency publication budgets have been slashed, and popular publications are being eliminated. The administration is also cutting

budgets of information-related activities. Agencies that collect and compile important economic data such as the Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics may no longer be able to produce all the data needed for decision making." English said the two bills proposing the most sweeping changes of the FOIA are one by Sen. Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, and one backed by the Reagan administration. He said they are similar, and effects of the Reagan bill are sweeping. He said the Reagan bill could cause the cost of obtaining information to be increased 10 to 20 times. He said one section, proposed to protect confidential business information could be used as an excuse to withhold information on contracts, delivery delays and cost overruns.

"The Reagan proposal to protect business data may just give agencies another excuse to hide waste, fraud and corruption," he said. "I have yet to be convinced that any changes in this FOIA exemption are justified." English said one Reagan proposal would provide that if answering a request took more than eight hours of search and review time, the time limit for reply would be extended to one year for a request and six months for an appeal. English said this would permit an agency to stall on a reply. "I suspect," he said, "that if the agency doesn't like the request or the requester, then the estimate will be nine hours or more."

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## The book proves it: words are a-changin'

United Press International  
NEW YORK — If you think a WATS line is something you get after 40 or a floppy disc is the result of riding too many subways, you may need to reload your verbal data base. To help you understand the new words and phrases of the few years, N.H. and S.K. Lager have written a book called "The Morrow Book of New Words" that defines 8,500 contemporary terms not yet listed in standard dictionaries. Many of the words in the book reflect America's love of science and technology, and others are just hipster words that seem to have floated into the language from Malibu or Greenwich Village. Some examples: Did you know that a "com-backer" is a baseball hit along the ground directly toward the batter? That, one assumes, is different from a "shot" or linedrive ball with decapitation capabilities.

The next time you see police cars silently parked on the side of a street late at night you may be witnessing the common practice of "cooping" or resting or sleeping while on duty. Around Three Mile Island you may see people with "cutie pies." Those aren't attractive women of the 1940s, but are instruments to measure radiation levels. These tough times of recession have generated some new terms besides fear and loathing. Words like "dehiring" or dismissing employees in reverse order of hiring, which may be caused by "stagflation," or a period of economic stagnation with substantial increases in prices and "labor intensive" production, a process that requires a high proportion of labor. Then there are group words. A "grouper" is a member of an encounter-psychotherapy group. A "groupie" follows famous people especially rock 'n' roll singers. The "Group of 5"

is composed of the five major non-Communist economic powers — the United States, West Germany, Britain, Japan and France. The "Group of 77" is the collection of developing countries. And, the next time you are on the "coast" (any coast) and you feel you're suffering from a verbal "identity crisis," you need not resort to "ikebana" (Japanese art of flower arrangement) to beautify your "space," or "stonewall" it if someone asks what's wrong. All you have to say is: "I'm OK, it's just a temporary crash, just a slight ripple in the flow, no sea change, no big thing, man." By the way, a WATS line is an acronym for Wide Area Telecommunication Service and allows a user to make unlimited calls within a large geographical area for a set monthly charge. A floppy disc is a flexible, magnetic-coated plastic disk used for storing data in a computer.

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