!!Sa to the NEWS

by PHYLLIS SCHLAFLY

Box 618, Alton, Illinois **62002**
Phone: 618-462-5415

RELEASE: March 22

LARRY FLINT'S CAMPAIGN

The publisher of HUSTLER magazine, who was convicted for "pandering obscenity and engaging in organized crime," has decided to go over the heads of the judge and jury and take his case to President Carter and to the press.

Although the President declined the opportunity to see Larry Flint when he turned up at the White House gate offering a check for a million dollars as a sweetener, 89 celebrities signed Flint's full-page newspaper advertisement, and press articles generally sympathetic to Flint have been, like spring, "busting out all over."

Larry Flint, his symphathizers, and the front organization that operates out of his Cincinnati office called "Americans for a Free Press," are doing a slick public relations job of wrapping Flint's obscenity in the First Amendment and in the aura of heroism that surrounds the Soviet dissidents striving for their freedom of speech under an oppressive totalitarian regime.

It just won't wash. As one writer who declined the invitation to sign the advertisement commented, "To compare Larry Flint to Andrei Sakharov is almost the only funny thing I can think of about HUSTLER magazine."

Chief Justice Warren Burger decisively answered the First Amendment argument in the currently leading Supreme Court case on obscenity: "To equate the free and robust exchange of ideas and political debate with commercial exploitation of obscene material demeans the grand conception of the First Amendment and it, high purpose in the historic struggle for freedom."

As the Chief Justice further emphasized in his 1973 decision, the stern 19th century American restrictions on the publication and disp ay of obscenity in no way limited the expression of literary, artistic, political or scientific ideas.

Pornography peddlers argue that it is unreasonable and impractical for a

(more}

magazine publisher to meet the differtng obscentty standards of 50 states. But there is no reason why they alone should have a special privilege to be exempt from differing state laws when other manufacturers and organizations must comply.

For example, manufacturers offering prizes nationwide have always been governed by the differing lottery laws in the 50 states, no matter how expensive or inconvenient. Charitable and educational organizations raising funds nationally are required to meet the detailed and restrictive standards of solicitation and reporting set separately by the 50 states. Compliance with these differing laws costs such organizations thousands of dollars a year in legal and accounting expenses.

Chief Justice Burger, in his same 1973 decision, explained the moral reason to allow the states to set their own standards: "It is neither realistic nor constitu tionally sound to read the First Amendment as requiring that the people of Maine or Mississippi accept public depiction of conduct found tolerable in Las Vegas, or New York City."

The same people who now profess such devotion to an absolute interpretation of the First Amendment raised no objection over the last decade when billboards were removed from our freeways. Personally, I like billboards on the freeways because they help to keep me awake during hours of otherwise monotonous highway driving.

However, a self-appointed minority, led by Ladybird Johnson, imposed its aesthetic standards on a11 of us and interfered with my freedom to read and the freedom of lawabiding entrepreneurs to sell a harmless product that never incited anyone to crime.

Although Larry Flint's friends ask, "since when has bad taste been a crime?", what some people designate as bad taste in billboards has indeed been made a crime. It is much more important to clean up the moral filth of bookstores and newsstands than to remove unattractive billboards.

Larry Flint is reported to have said that all he ever wanted to do was to "become a millionaire -- whether by robbing a bank or b.Y. publis.hina akmagazine." The sentence he received was about the same as if he haa robued a nan •

(end)