

Contact: Lisa Hosbein  
For immediate release

LIBERTARIANS HIT POLICE LIBEL SUIT AGAINST GAY PAPER

OAKLAND--Libertarian Party state chairman Bill Evers says that the current \$20 million libel suit by two San Francisco police officers against a weekly newspaper that serves San Francisco's homosexual community is "further evidence that libel laws are preventing the exercise of a fully free press in this country."

The multi-million dollar suit brought by the two police officers, with the backing of the San Francisco Police Officers Association, is against the Bay Area Reporter, its publisher, its editor, and a reporter. The suit is based on an article which reported on a meeting that discussed alleged police brutality against members of the city's homosexual community. Two officers who were mentioned in the article filed the suit in San Francisco Superior Court on July 13. The American Civil Liberties Union is handling the defense of the newspaper.

Libertarians, according to Evers, are against "all forms of government censorship." In this case, he points out, public employees are trying to use the legal system to prevent members of the public from commenting on the employees' job performance.

"One of the great virtues of a free press," Evers said, is that it is the tyrant's foe and the people's friend. People have to be able to use their printing presses to criticize government officials." He fears that the liberty of the press is being "nibbled away by libel suits like this one."