

Neal Challenges Woofter To Debate

By Ed Brown

The much publicized, proposed debate between State Senator Joe Neal (D-Las Vegas) and Las Vegas City Commissioner Roy Woofter is rapidly taking shape. Neither office holder, however, feels that it will take place.

Last week, it was reported that the Las Vegas Chapter of NAACP voted to launch a recall election against Woofter "for lack of representation" of the

black community. The petition drive, allegedly headed by Neal, would be made to obtain the necessary number of signatures to support the recall.

Woofter responded quickly to the report of the petition and said he was a good commissioner and was not worried about any attempt made by the NAACP to have him ousted.

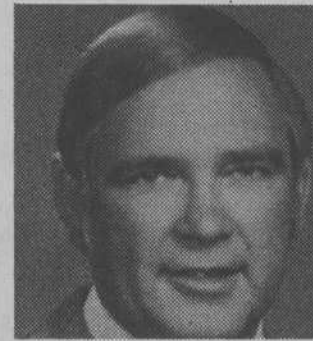
"I'm hearing that Woofter does not want to

debate me," said Neal. "He apparently has been told about my record and that I would not be easy on him if the debate takes place. If it comes off, there's one stipulation," Neal continued. "I would pick the time and place and it would be on the Westside."

Woofter immediately challenged the statements of Neal and offered to debate him on this or any issue. "I'm ready to debate Neal any time - his

record against mine on the merits as to who does more for the black community. I stand on my progressive record," Woofter was quick to relate. "I have been told that Neal just wants to sit down and talk with me - not a debate. I stand ready to debate him."

Alice Key, executive director of the local chapter, NAACP, said a response was made at the NAACP meeting last week to deal with the Com-



WOOFTER



NEAL

prehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) board allocations of money made to various programs in Clark County. She indicated that Woofter's failure to respond to the concerns of the black residents in his ward, was an example of his failure to represent his constituency.

The NAACP leaders have complained to the board, headed by County Commissioner Manny Cortez, that funds were directed in favor of the Spanish groups over the black concerns," said Key. "Woofter's failure to respond promptly to this problem has brought on a community uproar over his performance. If we had a black city councilperson, that person would have been here to say, "How can I help - but

he didn't," she continued.

Neal said he was very unhappy with the situation: "The recall move will get him on the ball or he's got to go."

The general consensus in the black community shows a feeling that the ground rules should be set up immediately with a debate coming off in about two weeks. However, a general distrust prevails among both factions. Neither has come forward to set the machinery in motion.

Las Vegas City Clerk Carol Hawley said around 840 signatures would be required in the recall petition from the 3,360 voters who participated in the last Ward 3 race. In that 1979 election, Woofter received 1,716 votes to 1,644 votes placed for Sarann Knight.

Politicians 'Adopt' Political Dissidents

WASHINGTON — (NB-NS) — Fifty members of Congress, in a recent effort to protect political prisoners in South Africa, each "adopted" someone who had been banned, detained or imprisoned for a political "crime."

The "political prisoner project" of the Congressional Ad Hoc Monitoring Group on Southern Africa (AHMG), according to co-chair Sen. Paul Tsongas, "is designed in part to prevent a recurrence of what happened to Steve Biko in 1977."

Biko, a leader of the Black Consciousness Movement, was the 46th political prisoner to die in police custody in South Africa in the past 25 years.

Tsongas said the adopting Congress member is invited "to correspond with the prisoner & his family, to write to the appropriate South Africa of-

ficial on his behalf, to publicize his plight and generally to promote the prisoner's safety and ultimate release."

Senator Tsongas has adopted Mrs. Winnie Mandela, who has been banned and confined to a remote rural area. Within days of the announcement, the Senator reported, a nervous phone call from the South African Embassy assured him of Mrs. Mandela's safety.

In South Africa, despite much talk of change, official violence and police brutality have intensified, according to the International Defense and Aid Fund for Southern Africa. They report that 1979 saw the highest pro rate prison population in the world and 133 executions — a record high and a 48 percent increase over the number for 1978, which itself saw a 47 percent increase over 1977.

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