

Nazi bills seen as more urgent

By ROBERT FEDER
Staff Writer

SKOKIE – Now that the village’s own legal options are dwindling, state legislators are stepping up their efforts on behalf of two bills designed to block a June 25 Nazi march in Skokie.

“If these bills were meaningful before, they are doubly meaningful now. Each time an avenue (of appeal) gets closed, they become more urgent,” said State Rep. Alan Greiman (D-15th), house sponsor of one of the bills.

The LIFE interviewed Greiman and State Rep. Peter Peters (R-15th) Tuesday, May 23, after a federal appeals court agreed with a lower court Monday, May 22, that Skokie’s own anti-Nazi ordinances were unconstitutional.

The two legislators expressed mild disappointment that the two bills – approved May 10 by the state senate – had been assigned for hearing to the house judiciary committee rather than the executive committee.

Peters said the bills would have fared better in the executive committee, where there are fewer lawyers and, presumably, more members sympathetic to Skokie’s position.

GREIMAN SAID, “Obviously, you like to find a committee that will be helpful, but if it should not pass in judiciary, you could still discharge it (for a full house vote) anyway.” Greiman is a member of the judiciary committee.

After considering amendments that would negate a “heckler’s veto,” he noted, the house should vote on both bills “in about 10 days.”

The bill sponsored by Greiman and co-sponsored by Peters and State Rep. William Laurino (D-15th) would make it illegal to defame any ethnic group publicly. The measure was sponsored in the senate by State Sen. Howard Carroll (D-15th).

The other bill, sponsored in the house by State Rep. Arthur Telcser (R-12th) and co-sponsored by Peters, bans demonstrations that might involve use of “physical force.” It was sponsored in the senate by State Sen. John Nimrod (R-4th).

Peters said he is looking forward to the house’s debate on the bills, regardless of the outcome. “I think you’ll see one of the finest hours in the General Assembly on points of law and liberty and rights. We’ll do a tremendous service by airing these issues,” he added.