

the system will not work as advertised. Should not the pages of **PHYSICS TODAY** be open to knowledgeable physicists who are deeply concerned about such issues? Certainly there is a lot of physics in how high-altitude nuclear explosions can be used to blanket out long-range radar. This one technical point that has so far not been openly discussed could possibly be the death blow to the proposed thin ABM system. An open discussion among independent scientists as well as the "establishment scientists" will better prepare us for exposing this hoax, if it is a hoax.

Not only should **PHYSICS TODAY** help us fulfill our responsibilities to society, but the APS should be providing for one or two sessions or symposia per meeting on science and society. The AAAS and its publication *Science* are way ahead of us. This year's annual meeting of the AAAS will have two sessions on the ABM issue among others of political interest. *Science* has had lively letters to the editor on chemical and biological warfare and the role of the scientist in the Vietnam conflict. Now that science has so swiftly spread to almost every corner of our society, I would recommend a similar editorial policy for **PHYSICS TODAY**.

The original APS constitution was fine for the age in which it was written. But since then the atomic age, the space age and the computer age have exploded upon us. Do we not have a duty to our benefactors, the tax-payers, to at least keep up with the times?

JAY OREAR
Cornell University
Chairman, Federation of
American Scientists

To meet our obligations

I strongly support the proposed amendment to the constitution of the American Physical Society that would allow the membership of the society to express themselves on public issues.

As physicists we are all very much aware of the impact of physics on public policy and vice versa. On the one hand, discoveries in physics dramatically affect national and interna-

tional events. Perhaps the most obvious examples have been in the field of nuclear physics, but we may also point to other advances such as in solid-state physics that have made the new generation of computers possible.

On the other hand, the physics community is directly affected by public policy. A large fraction of all research in physics is paid for by government funds. Additional government expenditures, such as for the war in Vietnam, divert funds and decrease productivity as well as eliminate jobs.

In addition to the mutual impact of physics and public policy, it is important to give some consideration to the human aspect of the proposed amendment.

Traditionally physicists tended to be isolated from public affairs. Since World War II, this "image" has dramatically changed. In fact, as a professional group, physicists are now among the most outspoken. This is especially true in academic environments.

Today physicists have become sufficiently concerned with public affairs that many are running for public office—from local positions to Congress (see "Physicists and the Elections," **PHYSICS TODAY**, November 1966, page 61).

I believe that the proposed amendment will help us as physicists to meet our obligations to society by enabling us to speak as a body and to use our influence directly to influence public policy.

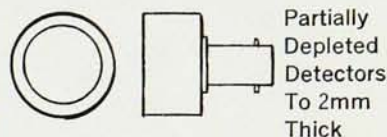
I. RICHARD LAPIDUS
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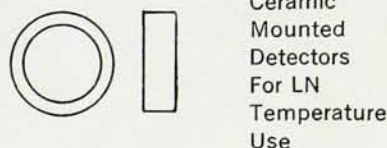
I would like to support the amendment to the constitution of the American Physical Society proposed by Charles Schwartz of the physics department of the University of California at Berkeley. Today the great issues of society, both domestic and foreign, are increasingly concerned with and influenced by modern science and technology. Indeed the influence of science and technology on public policy is becoming so great that in my view it is insufficient simply to discuss and advise on public issues. As much as such actions by scientists are needed, I believe we must go even

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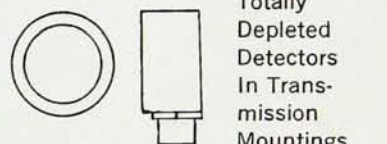
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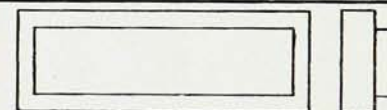
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