

Boys' Club issue before high court

SAN FRANCISCO — A Santa Cruz lawyer arguing before the state Supreme Court said Monday that countless organizations — including charitable groups — could be affected if the California Supreme Court rules that the Boys' Club must admit girls.

Bob Bosso of Santa Cruz, representing the local Boys' Club, said "There's no question a decision will have a wide effect." According to the Associated Press, Bosso added, "If we're found to be a 'business establishment,' then surely so will the Boy Scouts."

Three girls and two boys are seeking admission to the Boys' Club of

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Santa Cruz, arguing through lawyer Diane E. Thompson of San Francisco that the club must be classified as a business as defined by the state's 1959 Unruh Act.

The Unruh Act provides that businesses must provide "full and equal" accommodations, facilities and services to the public regardless of sex, race, color, religion, ancestry or national origin.

According to AP, Bosso argued that the Boys' Club is not a profit-making organization, but a nonprofit foundation devoted to serving disad-

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vantaged youths. The Boys' Club, founded in 1860, charges the boys annual dues of \$3.25.

The club is financed mainly by Mallery Trust Fund and from individual contributions. It provides gymnasium, library, crafts and kitchen facilities and swimming, table tennis, billiards and other activities to boys 8 to 18. It is located at 543 Center St.

Ms. Thompson disagreed with Bosso's view that a ruling the club fits the business classification necessarily means other groups would have to admit girls.

No decision on the appeal has been made by the court.

There are more than 1,000 Boys' Club affiliates in the United States, but the organization has no fixed national policy about admissions for girls and boys. Of the 99 Boys' Clubs in California, 19 admit girls.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California joined by the state attorney general's office and several groups representing racial minorities, contends if girls are excluded from the club the way would be clear for discrimination against blacks, Latinos or Asian-Americans.

The ACLU brought suit in 1979 on behalf of Victoria Isbister and two other girls denied membership in the club, along with two boys who asserted they were being denied the right to a "non-discriminatory environment."

The ACLU won a ruling in a trial court, but the state Court of Appeal ruled 2-1 to overturn the decision, finding that the club was not the kind of business establishment that the legislature had in mind when it approved the Unruh Act. The state's top court agreed to hear the ACLU appeal.