

Panel to decide merits of Lindner case

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The House Ethics Committee formally accepted a complaint Monday alleging that Rep. Arlon Lindner brought disrepute to the House when he made remarks that several DFLers called homophobic, anti-Semitic and racist. It set a hearing on the merits of the case for April 7.

The action came as an attorney for the Corcoran Republican made clear he plans to use the panel's upcoming hearings to draw more attention to the bill Lindner was promoting when he offended colleagues.

In fact, attorney James Anderson said that if DFLers try to withdraw the complaint and

end the hearings, he'll oppose the move. DFLers said they have no plans to withdraw the complaint.

The four-member panel will decide at its next meeting whether to dismiss the complaint as frivolous or send it on for a full hearing.

Lindner's bill would remove state civil rights protections for gays and lesbians. Anderson alleged that the underlying motive for DFLers in filing the ethics complaint was to frighten conservative legislators away from Lindner's bill.

DFLers, though, said they

didn't need any underlying motive to take Lindner to the committee for remarks he made on the floor.

Lindner questioned whether homosexuals were persecuted by the Nazis.

"We think denying the Holocaust is so outrageous and so ahistorical that we'll have no difficulty showing he brought the House into disrepute," said House Minori-

ty Leader Matt Entenza, DFL-St. Paul.

Rep. Sondra Erickson, R-Princeton, chairwoman of the ethics panel, was one of a handful of members who co-

sponsored Lindner's bill. She said at the meeting that she has removed her name as a sponsor.

House Speaker Steve Svigum, R-Kenyon, has said Lindner's bill won't get a hearing in the House, effectively killing it.

Entenza and Lindner agree on one thing: Both said the hearing ought to remain open to the public.

The makeup of the committee — two DFLers and two Republicans — means any action against Lindner would have to overcome partisan ties.

"I'm an idealist," said Rep. Ron Latz, DFL-St. Louis Park, one of the legislators who filed the complaint. "This is a bigger issue than partisanship."



Rep. Arlon Lindner