

Document 43 of 50.

Copyright 2001 Little Rock Newspapers, Inc.
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette (Little Rock, AR)

October 29, 2001, Monday

SECTION: NWANEWS; Pg. B3

LENGTH: 793 words

HEADLINE: 150 march to protest Stephens investment

BYLINE: BILL REITER, ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

BODY:

NW EDITION

More than 150 protesters marched through Pulaski Heights on Sunday, converging on the homes of Warren Stephens and a top Stephens Group Inc. executive as dozens of Little Rock police officers stood watch.

Chanting "Leave town, murderers!" and "Warren Stephens, it's got to stop!" some in the crowd raised banners depicting eviscerated **animals** demanding that Stephens withdraw financial support for Huntingdon Life Sciences.

The drug-testing company, based in Huntingdon, England, uses **animal** testing in its research. Stephens Group Inc. became the company's chief shareholder in January.

"These are the people who have continued to support Huntingdon," said Lauren James, a spokesman for Stop Huntingdon **Animal** Cruelty, or SHAC. "Our goal is to name them and shame them."

Stephens Inc. spokesman Frank Thomas said he had not heard of the protesters causing any problems.

"We have always respected the protesters' right to protest on this issue or any others," said Thomas. "But we also hope they respect the right of Stephens to invest in a company that is sound, well managed, has an excellent business plan and provides a service to its customers."

Stephens Group became involved with the company in 1997 when the Little Rock-based financial group invested money to help the 49-year-old company stay afloat after Huntingdon's stock value dropped from \$ 540 million to about \$ 13 million in a period of 10 years. Starting at the corner of Polk Street and Kavanaugh Boulevard, the marchers crossed to Van Buren Street and made their way to Longfellow Place and Longfellow Circle to the homes of Warren Stephens and Michael Smith Sr., Stephens Inc. executive vice president.

"This is what your neighbors are doing to **animals**," one woman screamed, holding a photograph of a bloodied dog.

As the protesters moved on, a man across the street tried to counter their chants: "Go home," he yelled, again and again.

The man, who refused to give his name, stood his ground as protesters crossed the street and walked by him.

A few bumped into him and a protester stuck a sticker of a bloody dog on his back.

"I would really like to talk to you about what's really going on," one woman said.

"All you care about are **animals**," he yelled at her. "Not people!"

Neighbors came to their doors and front yards, peering out at the crowd. Some laughed. Some waved. Some grimaced.

"It's a nonevent," one woman said. "I say they're peaceful marchers."

Others were less understanding.

"They're the worst-looking bunch of misfits I've ever seen," said Jack Nowlin, who said he has lived a few doors down from Stephens for 10 years.

The crowd halted in front of Stephens' home. Four uniformed police officers stood in the driveway.

Others waited in the background and were scattered throughout the neighborhood. A van filled with police in riot gear followed the group, and some neighbors said they saw police officers searching for weapons Saturday.

"I hope you don't think you can hide from the United States **animal**-rights movement," a woman with a bullhorn bellowed. She finished: "You will divest from Huntingdon!"

The media, police and a handful of spectators followed as the group moved a few blocks to Smith's home.

Tyler Bullock shook his head when protesters offered him a flyer.

"If we want to dissect an **animal** to find out what works," the 16-year-old said, "it's better than killing a person."

When the crowd stopped at Smith's house, the chanting resumed.

Matt Rossell smiled over the din of shouting protesters.

"I think it's powerful, and it's delivering a message to Little Rock," the 32-year-old from Portland, Ore., said. "The American people [are] not going to stand this waste of lives."

The crowd ebbed slowly up the street, back to Stephens' home, and out of the neighborhood. Moments later they came back.

"It's round two," a police officer said with a laugh. "Here they come again."

As the crowd passed, three women from the neighborhood sat on a porch watching the protest.

"When they get in the masses, that scares me," one woman said. "In the masses you can become whatever you want."
The women nodded in agreement. "It's very disruptive," one said. "I don't know what they want to accomplish."
Police officials said no one was arrested, and no damages or injuries were reported.
The crowd moved on, the protesters chanted, the neighbors watched, and the police stood at attention.
Then, about two hours after it all began, the crowd dispersed.
"It's over," one man said. "Let's go."
The activists are planning a protest today outside Stephens Inc. offices in downtown Little Rock.
Information for this report was contributed by Elisa Crouch and Violet Law of the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette.

LOAD-DATE: October 29, 2001

[\[Main Menu\]](#) [\[Last Form\]](#) [\[Document List\]](#) [\[Full View\]](#) [\[KWIC View\]](#) [\[Prev\]](#) [\[Next\]](#) [\[Help\]](#)
[\[About LEXIS-NEXIS\]](#) [\[Terms and Conditions\]](#)

[Copyright](#)© 2003 LEXIS-NEXIS Group. All rights reserved.