

of the victims on those planes are met with helping hands and offers of assistance. They are met with intensive investigations as to causes and apologies for events gone wrong. If the families are unsatisfied, they have recourse to means (namely the court system) to alleviate their loss.

This was not true for everyone on the Ron Brown trip. Because this trip was government sponsored and occurred on a government aircraft, and because the crash happened on foreign soil, the victims on that plane were caught in a tremendous catch-22 that prevented their grieving families from seeking restitution for their loss. After extended negotiations, families of private citizens were awarded settlements from the Air Force.

Families of deceased federal employees were not.

Federal employees' survivors are not entitled to seek such restitution because the law provides only for those benefits within the scope of the Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA). Even under situations where there may be clear cause, these persons are barred from the court system to argue their case.

The victims of TWA 800 could go to TWA or the Boeing Company for redress. The victims of Egypt Air 990 could go Egypt Air or the Boeing Company for restitution. The victims of CT-43A have only their government to turn to, and their government has turned them down.

This rejection is hurtful not because the law is so strict in its treatment of the victims. The rejection is hurtful because the post-crash investigation found deliberate violation in the chain of command that allowed the airplane to fly the day of the crash; numerous safety deficiencies on the airplane; and overt aircrew error. When this much goes wrong, and when the wrongs are items that should never have happened had normal precautions been in place and standard operating procedures been followed, then there is every reason to ask for redress.

The legislation being introduced today will provide \$2 million to each family of the victims on the Ron Brown plane who were federal employees. This will provide some measure of confidence to the families that yes, the government that employed the victims cared about them, in their lives and in their deaths. I ask all of you to join with me today in making these families who lost so much know that the circumstances of their loved ones' deaths will be met with justice.

SUPPORT SATELLITE REFORM
LEGISLATION

HON. PETER DEUTSCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 10, 1999

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3261, the "Communications Satellite Competition and Privatization Act of 1999." I want to commend Chairman BLILEY for his commitment to this important legislation and for his efforts in working with Congressman TAUZIN and Congressman MARKEY. Together, they have produced an excellent, bi-

partisan bill that is designed to bring the benefits of competition to consumers of satellite communications. This bill will reform the 1962 Act—a law that is woefully outdated and in need of a complete overhaul.

Today, we still rely on a foreign government-controlled treaty organization—INTELSAT—to provide the bulk of international satellite services to and from the United States. This structure was designed in the 1960's when it was believed that only governments and monopolies could finance and operate satellites. So much has changed since those early days. Today, the United States leads the world in satellite manufacturing and technology. Yet, we still cling to the 1960's governmental model that stifles competition, trade, and ingenuity—all to the detriment of consumers.

H.R. 3261 will end the last remaining telecom monopoly in the United States and provide incentives to encourage INTELSAT, and its sister organization, INMARSAT, to privatize in a procompetitive manner. The bill uses access to the U.S. market to encourage INTELSAT and INMARSAT to so privatize. If they refuse, they will still have access to the U.S. market for the services they were originally created to provide—such as public telephone and maritime services—but they will not be permitted to compete with private commercial providers of new services such as direct-to-home TV and high-speed Internet. To gain admission to the U.S. market for these new competitive services, they will first have to shed their governmental privileges and immunities and become truly competitive and private.

COMSAT will also be normalized by this legislation. When Congress created COMSAT 37 years ago, it granted COMSAT a monopoly over access to the INTELSAT, and later, the INMARSAT satellites. COMSAT has been the only U.S. company permitted by law to directly use these valuable satellites. Any other U.S. company that wanted or needed access to these satellites, like AT&T, MCI, the networks, had first to go to COMSAT. It has enjoyed the exclusive U.S. franchise.

COMSAT is not only the monopoly reseller of INTELSAT services in the U.S., but under the law no other company or individual is permitted to invest in INTELSAT. This has been a very lucrative benefit as INTELSAT pays a guaranteed rate of return to its investors of about 18 percent annually. We should all be so lucky with our investments. The time is long overdue for Congress to end this—we must end COMSAT's monopoly over access to and investment in INTELSAT. Congress shouldn't be dictating who can invest in INTELSAT. The U.S. would not be alone if we finally end this as over 90 other countries permit direct access of some kind, and 29 of those permit multiple investors.

COMSAT also has much to gain from this legislation. In exchange for the monopoly benefits granted to COMSAT under the 1962 act, Congress imposed some restrictions as well. For example, no one could own more than 49 percent of COMSAT. This legislation will free COMSAT of these restrictions.

This bill will permit users of satellite services to go directly to INTELSAT to purchase satellite capacity. The FCC has determined that

this will result in cost savings of up to 71 percent. A 1998 study documented that reform legislation would save U.S. consumers \$29 billion over 10 years. Worldwide savings would reach \$6.9 billion.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3261. It brings the full benefits of competition to consumers and it will permit COMSAT to move ahead in this rapidly changing world of telecommunications.

CABIN USER FEE FAIRNESS ACT
OF 1999

HON. GEORGE R. NETHERCUTT, JR.

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 10, 1999

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to introduce the Cabin User Fee Fairness Act of 1999 with my colleagues, Senator CRAIG and Senator THOMAS. The legislation will establish a new appraisal process to determine a fair fee for Forest Service cabins. Under the formula established by the bill, appraisals would be based on the raw value of the land, adjusted for structures and services provided by the Forest Service.

The Cabin User Fee Fairness Act will address two major concerns with the current appraisal process. First, the appraisal methodology currently used by the Forest Service is not arriving at the appropriate value of the use of a lot by a cabin owner. Federal property differs from private land in that the owners do not maintain the same rights and privileges to their property as those held by private landowners. For example, permit holders cannot make modifications to the land or their cabin without the approval of the Forest Service, they cannot reside in their cabin on a year round basis and they cannot deny others access to the land on which the cabin is built. These factors should be taken into consideration in the appraisal process.

A second major concern with the current process is how the traditional objectives of the Forest Service are changing under the new appraisal process. Recreational residences have been dominated by families. Some of these families are older, some young and some span generations, but the existence of families, many from relatively modest economic backgrounds, enhances the mission of the Forest Service to provide for the public at large. A dramatic and rapid fee increase diminishes the family atmosphere of the areas. Public lands exist for the enjoyment of a broad spectrum of Americans and dramatic fee increases hurt this objective.

In each of the last two years, Congress enacted stop-gap measures through the Appropriations Committee, on which I serve, to gradually increase the fee rates while a long-term solution could be developed. The legislation I introduce today will provide for such a permanent solution to the problem.

The passage of well thought-out legislation today, with the support and understanding of all parties, will avoid costly and adverse conflicts down the line. I urge my colleagues to support the Cabin User Fee Fairness Act.