

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

INTRODUCTION OF THE RURAL LOCAL BROADCAST SIGNAL ACT OF 2000

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 10, 2000

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleague from Virginia, Congressman RICK BOUCHER, to introduce crucial legislation that will have a significant impact on the lives of millions of Americans, especially those who live in smaller cities and towns, on farms and throughout rural areas. This legislation will ensure that community information such as local weather forecasts, natural disaster alerts, and local government announcements reach those who needed it most.

Our legislation, entitled the Rural Local Broadcast Signal Act, would accomplish these goals by authorizing the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, to provide loan guarantees to entities that can obtain the private funding to launch technologies that will provide local TV signals over satellite in the medium sized and smaller TV markets. Through these loan guarantees, the RUS will continue its mission of promoting economic development and improving the lives of rural Americans while fulfilling the original intention of legislation enacted last November—to enable all Americans to receive their local television signals over satellite.

I was proud to be a member of the conference committee on the recently enacted Intellectual Property and Communications Omnibus Reform Act of 1999, which included language to allow direct broadcast satellite providers to immediately begin retransmitting local television broadcast signals into the broadcast station's area, subject to a retransmission consent agreement negotiated with each station carried. This new law allows satellite providers to become more effective competitors to cable operators, who have been able to provide local over-the-air broadcast stations to their subscribers for years. It will also benefit American consumers in markets where local TV via satellite is made available by offering them full service digital television at an affordable price.

More importantly, these consumers will benefit from local news, weather reports, information such as natural disasters or community emergencies, local sports, politics, and election information, as well as other information that is vital to maintaining the integrity of communities across the country.

Local TV via satellite is already available to satellite subscribers in America's twenty largest television markets. In these markets DirecTV and EchoStar, the existing satellite "platform providers," have begun retransmission of affiliates of the ABC, CBS, NBC, and FOX broadcast networks. DirecTV and

EchoStar have also announced their intention to begin retransmission of local TV stations in an additional twenty or thirty television markets over the next 24 months. Ultimately, the two existing satellite, "platform providers" will provide local TV via satellite to households in most, if not all, of the 50 largest television markets in the United States.

However, there are 211 markets in the United States and in excess of 100 million U.S. TV households. There, if matters are left solely to the initiative of the existing satellite "platform providers," more than 50 percent of existing satellite subscribers (over 6 million households) will continue to be deprived of their local TV stations; more than 60 percent of existing commercial television stations (over 1,000) will NOT be available via satellite; and more than 30 million US TV households will remain beyond the reach of local TV via satellite.

Put another way, local TV via satellite will not be available in 27 states and in parts of nearly every state.

So while the law enacted last fall has eliminated the legal barriers to delivery of local TV via satellite, it alone will not assure delivery of local TV via satellite to the majority of local TV stations and satellite subscribers. For that reason, and because many folks in parts of my district and in the districts of most members on this Committee cannot receive their local signals any other way, I am joining with RICK BOUCHER, JOANN EMERSON, and over 100 Members of the House in supporting this legislation to assure that all Americans, not just those in profitable urban markets, can receive their local TV signals over satellite.

STRAIGHT SHOOTER: SHERIFF
CHARLIE PLUMMER

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 10, 2000

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, for the past 13 years, California's Alameda County has been blessed to have a tough, hard-working, straight-talking sheriff named Charles Plummer.

The January 2, 2000 issue of *The Argus* carried an excellent profile of this outstanding public servant, that I would like to submit, in part, in the RECORD. It is a model for those interested in law enforcement and public service throughout the nation.

I would like to especially commend Sheriff Plummer for his stance on gun control and the need for reasonable regulation. I am proud to note that this has been an issue that has moved him from the Republican party to the Democratic party.

CONTROVERSIAL ALAMEDA COUNTY SHERIFF
CHARLIE PLUMMER OFTEN TALKS TOUGH,
BUT HE ALSO WALKS THE WALK

(By Josh Richman)

A framed photo on Alameda County Sheriff Charles Plummer's office wall depicts him shouting at someone behind a police crowd-control line. The caption: "'Cause I'm the sheriff, that's why. If you don't like it, get outta here!'"

That's Charles Clifford Plummer to a T. He'll hear your concerns, take suggestions and perhaps even follow them, but never forget he's the boss.

The affable-but-tough-talking lawman has carried a badge for 37 years and, at age 69, shows little sign of slowing down. His department's main duties include policing the county's unincorporated areas, running the county's jails and coroner's bureau, and protecting county courts.

Plummer also is a sharp-dressed, number-crunching CEO who runs his 1,650-person-strong, \$145.7 million agency like a business. He has a taste for pricey cigars, and he donned a tuxedo rather than a uniform for his swearing-in ceremony. He rules from a 12th-floor corner office choked with international police memorabilia and boasting panoramic vistas of Lake Merritt and the hills.

Some of his deputies accuse him of tyrannical bullying, but most officials and fellow lawmen praise his bluntness.

"He is old-school in the sense that when he gives his word, he keeps it," California Attorney General Bill Lockyer said, adding that Plummer's post as president of the California Sheriff's Association "is an indication of the high regard that other elected sheriffs have for his leadership and abilities."

VALUES AND WORK ETHIC

Plummer was born Aug. 17, 1930, in Fort Bragg. His parents separated when he was six and he grew up in his maternal grandmother's home, where he said he learned "values and a work ethic that have been with me forever."

He was on high school football, track and basketball teams, performed in the band and drama club, and was senior class president. He took a job as a water well-digger at age 10; while in school, and at Santa Rosa Junior College, he worked as a gardener, shingle mill worker, lumber, camp rigger, apple picker, construction worker, vacuum cleaner salesman and hospital attendant.

He planned to become a mortician, but a California Highway Patrol officer picked him up hitchhiking and talked him into using his gregarious nature and large size to advantage as an officer.

The Berkeley Police Department was "the best in the United States, and that's why I wanted to go there," Plummer said, adding that it seemed like "the West Point of all police work." He joined in 1952 and served there for 24 years, acting as field commander during some of the fiercest student demonstrations and riots of the 1960s and early 1970s. He reached the rank of captain in 1969 and was appointed acting chief in 1973.

He became chief of the Hayward Police Department in 1976. Ten years later he ran for

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