

The committee on conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the House to the bill (S. 376) have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses this report, signed by all of the conferees.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of the conference report. (The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of today, March 2, 2000.)

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I extend my sincere appreciation to Senate Commerce Committee Chairman MCCAIN, Senator HOLLINGS, House Commerce Committee Chairman BLILEY, Representative MARKEY, and all of the other Members of the Senate-House conference for working together in a bi-partisan manner on satellite reform legislation. Through the dedication of the conference, and in particular Chairman BLILEY, the 106th Congress can now present President Clinton with the opportunity to sign into law a meaningful bill that will enhance market competition and benefit consumers everywhere.

When I undertook the challenge of guiding legislation through the Senate that would encourage genuine competition in the rapidly evolving international satellite communications industry through deregulation, I declared five basic principles that would serve as the foundation for my effort.

(1) The legislation must enhance competition in the global satellite communications market;

(2) The legislation must be consistent with the United States' existing treaty obligations;

(3) The legislation must enhance global satellite connectivity to all areas, including remote and rural;

(4) The legislation must ultimately increase consumers' choices, enable technological innovation and lower costs; and

(5) The legislation cannot impose any unnecessary new regulatory schemes on this vibrant global industry.

These principles were incorporated into The Open Market Reorganization for the Betterment of International Telecommunications Act, known as ORBIT, S. 376 which the Senate swiftly and unanimously passed. I am very pleased to note that the conference agreement now before the Senate retains the core principles reflected in ORBIT while accommodating the concerns articulated by Chairman BLILEY and his House colleagues.

This compromise legislation represents the desire of Congress to inject more competition and more privatization into the international satellite communications market. Specifically, the conference agreement achieves these important objectives by:

Establishing definite and reasonable criteria and dates certain for the privatization of INTELSAT and Inmarsat.

Calling for an IPO of the privatized INTELSAT of October 1, 2001, but pru-

dently recognizing that market conditions must be taken into account and therefore, allowing the IPO date to be extended to no later than December 31, 2002.

Eliminating INTELSAT's and COMSAT's privileges and immunities while protecting COMSAT for action taken in response to instructions of the U.S. Government in carrying out its responsibilities as the U.S. signatory.

Eliminating upon enactment the antiquated ownership and board restrictions on the U.S. signatory to INTELSAT, thereby allowing Lockheed Martin to complete its acquisition of COMSAT upon enactment of this bill without conditions.

Creating a competitive, level playing field in the satellite industry.

Removing the intrusive role of government in the commercial satellite industry.

Using access to the U.S. market as a strong incentive to keep INTELSAT's privatization effort moving forward without delay.

I am especially pleased that the conference agreement rejects any notion that the government should be interfering in the contractual arrangements between COMSAT and either its customers or INTELSAT. The government should not be permitting, let alone encouraging, abrogation or modification of any such arrangement. Among my serious concerns, I concluded long ago that this would be contrary to the Fifth Amendment's Takings Clause. The bill before us is very clear on this point. This legislation in no way directs the FCC to take any action that would impair private contracts or agreements.

On a related point, the conference agreement also flatly rejects "Level IV direct access" in any form. Permitting or requiring Level IV direct access would have unfairly forced a divestiture of COMSAT's INTELSAT assets. I am pleased that the conference agreement flatly rejects Level IV direct access.

Let me also commend Senator STEVENS and our good friend, Mr. DINGELL, in the other body for improving this bill in conference with the addition of language to preserve our national security interests. The conference has produced an agreement that will encourage expeditious privatization of INTELSAT and Inmarsat and allow Lockheed Martin to reinvigorate COMSAT as a competitor in the international satellite marketplace.

At the end of the day, the conference agreement will lead to enhanced competition in telecommunications services, resulting in real consumer benefits of more choices, lower prices and new services. For this, we should all be very proud. I strongly urge my colleagues to adopt this conference report.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the conference

report be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the conference report be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The conference report was agreed to.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE
CALENDAR—H.R. 5

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent that H.R. 5 be placed on the calendar.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONGRATULATING THE REPUBLIC
OF LITHUANIA ON THE TENTH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE REESTABLISHMENT OF ITS INDEPENDENCE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Con. Res. 91 introduced earlier today by Senators DURBIN, GORTON, LOTT, HELMS, and others.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 91) congratulating the Republic of Lithuania on the tenth anniversary of the reestablishment of its independence from the rule of the former Soviet Union.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the concurrent resolution?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, March 11 will mark the 10th anniversary of the declaration of independence of Lithuania from the domination of the Soviet Union. Lithuania led the way for other Soviet Republics to throw off the yolk of Soviet Communist imperialism, resulting in the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

This declaration was not without cost—in January 1991, Soviet paratroopers stormed the Press House in Vilnius, injuring four people. Barricades were set up in front of the Lithuanian Parliament, the Seimas. Soviet forces attacked the television station and tower in Vilnius, killing 13 Lithuanians. One woman was killed when she tried to block a Soviet armored personnel carrier.

But these courageous Lithuanians did not suffer and die in vain. Lithuania has now become a vibrant democracy. It has established a free-market economy and the rule of law. Lithuania wants to be fully integrated into Europe, and is seeking membership in the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO.

This year we also celebrate the 60th anniversary of the U.S. Congress' insistence that Soviet domination of the