

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 3615, the bill just considered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER
AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1283

Mr. TALENT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 1283.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

RADIO BROADCASTING
PRESERVATION ACT OF 2000

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of today and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for consideration of the bill, H.R. 3439.

□ 1812

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 3439) to prohibit the Federal Communications Commission from establishing rules authorizing the operation of new, low power FM radio stations, with Mr. LAHOOD in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the order of the House, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

The gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. TAUZIN) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. TAUZIN).

□ 1815

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I want to take this moment to inform the House that I intend to make a formal request upon the Department of Justice regarding a potential criminal violation of our statutes to the extent that the FCC, through its director and associate director of their political office, has apparently transmitted faxes to Subcommittee on Telecommunications, Trade and Consumer Protection legislative assistants and legislative directors urging support or opposition to the bill that is before the House today, in direct contravention to 18 U.S.C.,

section 1913, which provides that no part of the monies appropriated by Congress shall in the absence of express authorization be used directly or indirectly to pay for any personal service, advertisement, telegram, telephone, letter, printed or written matter, or other device intended or designed to influence any Member of the United States Congress.

Mr. Chairman, today the House considers H.R. 3439, the Radio Broadcasting Preservation Act. At the outset, let me commend the sponsor of this bill the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. OXLEY) for his work on this legislation. Credit is also due to the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Mrs. WILSON) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL), the ranking member of the Committee on Commerce, for their extraordinary work in presenting the bipartisan compromise legislation that is before us today.

This language passed our full Committee on Commerce by voice vote last month.

Mr. Chairman, this bill represents a true compromise. It allows for the FCC to proceed with plans to implement a low-power FM radio service to address the community needs of many localities.

The original legislation introduced in January, which gained the support of over 120 cosponsors, would have prevented the FCC from issuing any of these low-power FM licenses and would have effectively killed the FCC's low-power program altogether.

The language that the House considers today offers the FCC significantly more latitude than the original bill would have.

First and foremost, the bill allows the FCC to immediately begin issuing licenses to low-power FM stations under the current interference standards used today to allocate spectrum on the FM dial. The FCC will thus be able to issue about 70 of these new licenses.

Furthermore, the bill institutes a pilot program to test the possible signal interference in nine geographic areas under the relaxed interference standards that the FCC recommends now.

Finally, and this is an important point, the bill maintains Congressional authority over any future changes made to the interference protections that exist in the FM dial today.

Let me take a minute to expand on this issue. The FCC has proceeded full steam ahead to implement this new service, even after learning about substantial concerns from both Republican and Democratic members of the Committee on Commerce.

We held a hearing to address these technical interference issues back in February. At that time, many members of our committee urged the Commission to proceed slowly with this

program in order to carefully study the potential harmful effects on our Nation's airwaves. Without regard to these Congressional concerns, the Commission forged ahead and began implementing the program.

The bill correctly recognizes the need for Congressional oversight when it comes to such important issues as spectrum management. Before the FCC changes existing protections, protections that are as important to radio stations, public and commercial, as they are to radio listeners across America, I think it is imperative that Congress must have the authority to review any FCC changes over existing protections.

I will strongly oppose any amendment offered that would strip the Congress of its rightful oversight authority.

I trust the House will agree with me and recognize the tremendous movement that has been made in this compromise language to give the FCC authority to roll out low-power FM where there will be no interference and yet to do a pilot program before Congress gives it authority to indeed change its interference rules and allow further roll out of the program.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the bill and against any amendments that would weaken it.

I want to point out again, Mr. Chairman, when the FCC uses money appropriated to it to lobby this Congress, my colleagues all ought to pay a lot of attention. It is a criminal violation, I believe, and I will ask the Department of Justice to investigate it. But when they go so far as to break the criminal laws of a country that prohibit this form of lobbying, we ought to really think about giving them authority to move forward before Congress says go forward on this important roll-out program.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) is recognized.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Chairman, yield myself 3½ minutes.

Mr. Chairman, the bill under consideration today, H.R. 3439, represents an extremely constructive and wise compromise reached in the Committee on Commerce over the future of low-power FM radio service.

I particularly want to commend my colleagues, the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Mrs. WILSON), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. OXLEY), the gentleman from Virginia (Chairman BLILEY), as well as my good friend the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. TAUZIN) for a reasonable, common sense solution to the problem which existed.

The compromise, which was entirely bipartisan, allows some low-power stations to be licensed under existing interference standards immediately,