

Ad Hoc Committee on Grassroots Lobbying

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From the ARRL Board Meeting of January 2004

57. On motion of Dr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Frenaye, it was unanimously VOTED that the President is directed to appoint immediately an Ad Hoc committee to develop plans and procedures for an effective grassroots lobbying campaign involving ARRL Directors, Vice Directors, Section Managers, and ARRL members. The program shall be presented in draft form to the Executive Committee at its next regularly scheduled meeting, with the aim of commencing the program in time to benefit the ARRL's legislative agenda during the current congressional session. The Ad Hoc committee will include at least three Directors and/or Vice Directors, two Section Managers and such other ex-officio advisors as the President shall deem necessary, including the ARRL's Government Relations firm and the General Counsel.

Committee Members:

Directors: Frank Fallon, **N2FF**, Hudson Division - Chair
Jim Weaver, **K8JE**, Great Lakes Division

Vice Directors: David Woolweaver, **K5RAV**

Section Managers: Ed Bruette, **N7NVP**, Western Washington
Roy C Rabey III, **AD5KZ**, North Texas

Ex-Officio: James "Mike" Lout, **WB5RFK**, Jasper, TX

ARRL Public Relations Firm: John Chawt

ARRL General Council: Chris Imlay, **W3KD**

At this point, the committee has only recently begun its work via teleconferences and does not expect to have completed its task until the January 2005 Board meeting. Meanwhile, it has become clear that we must immediately put in place some portion of the plan so that ARRL will be able to influence the BPL drama being acted out in Washington. We feel that some directors, those with Tier 1 and Tier 2 congressional leaders in their divisions, will need to immediately select and appoint members who can fill these slots and begin to open doors for our Washington lobbying team.

The draft document is an overview of a portion of the "legislative action plan" we will formally propose in January.

DRAFT DOCUMENT Grassroots Legislative Action Committee

A quick read through "200 Meters and Down" will show that our first president, the Old Man, Hiram Percy Maxim was a master at legislative action, able to leap entrenched opposition to accomplish the almost impossible. When he came to Washington in 1925 to plead Amateur Radio's case and fight off those who would grab our frequencies, the Navy Department in that

case, he had the attention of key legislative insiders. While he may not have been able to accomplish this in a single bound; he was successful in getting the job done. Political action was certainly part of the Old Man's culture. But then he had a lot more going for him than most of us. He came from a wealthy, well-known family and was part of a large manufacturing business and thus well able to get the ear of Washington leaders and legislators. His family had invented the Maxim machine gun, which at that time was considered a weapon of mass destruction having taken so many lives in what we now know as World War One. While old Hiram has long since passed away the problems and the enemies of Amateur Radio have not gone away over the years. The threats are real and still there, only different and perhaps larger.

Today, unfortunately, we do not have anyone quite like Old Hiram to come to our aide. While the ARRL Board and its officers and full time staff in Newington are well aware of the problems facing our great service we do not have the direct access to Washington leaders and legislators that the Hiram had. We also realize that there has been a change in the way government, the legislative process and politics work in the new century. No longer is the FCC alone deciding the fate of Amateur Radio. There was a time when good technical arguments to the FCC could win the day for us. Congress over the last decade has involved itself more directly in spectrum and communications matters. Now, in 2004, the President and the Executive Branch have become involved. Politics has raised its head. In an ideal world that would not be so. We find now that we must engage in the political/legislative as a pragmatic solution to protect our spectrum from pollution and grabs by business interests.

In order to have our voice heard today we need to Maximize our effort, pun intended, by using our largest resource, our members to bring our needs, concerns, and issues before congressional representatives and senators. While we may not have any one ARRL member with the "political clout" of Hiram or Senator Barry Goldwater, we do have many political savvy members within our ranks. Our members, who vote and are constituents, are a great resource, which can help overcome the well-financed opposition we frequently face. We need simply to identify them, brief them, and then let them begin to open the doors to the key federal legislators who can help us. In short, we need a Grassroots Lobbying effort to energize our members to help get our message to Washington legislators. We believe our members are up to the task.

Currently we are not set up to do that in any formal way. While we have positions in the Field Service Bureau -- State Government Liaison, and Local Government Liaison -- these positions are really designed to cover state initiatives, such as license plate bills and Ad

antenna legislation, or local efforts such as Field Day proclamations or zoning board appeals. We don't want to further burden these volunteers and there is no direct link to them through the ARRL Board.

Our Grassroots Legislative Action Committee is a national effort rather than a state effort. Yes, it will be conducted in states but it is in reality a federal effort on a national scale directed by ARRL Board policy decisions. The goals will always be to effect some change or action on a federal level in Washington, DC rather than a state capitol. As the ARRL Board meets at least twice a year and is briefed at that time by our ARRL President, our Executive Vice-President, ARRL General Council, and our Washington lobbyist, John Chwat, it seems only correct that the

ARRL Board should oversee this effort. The fifteen ARRL directors are kept directly in the loop through these face-to-face meetings. Our ARRL Section managers have no similar face to face meeting with these key officers and staff.

The Committee believes also that Section Managers and their SLG's and LGL's are already heavily burdened and should not be given this additional task. Additionally directors already have a heavy workload.

We therefore suggest an entirely new and separate mechanism to accomplish this vital national lobbying mission to be overseen by either the Executive Committee or a permanent **Legislative Action Committee**. We see the need for a:

1. **Division Legislative Action Chair** -- one in each division -- becomes a division cabinet member
2. **State Legislative Action Coordinator** -- at least one in each state -- becomes a cabinet member
3. **Legislative Action Assistants** -- a number assisting the state coordinator

We propose the creation of a **Legislative Action Chair** in each division to implement "grassroots lobbying" for the ARRL legislative program, which at this point includes a BPL initiative and two different bills in Congress. The division director will designate this individual who will then implement the program of grassroots actions explained below. Ideally this individual would already have had some experience with lobbying activities, having been involved though business, professional, or union membership with similar grassroots groups. Absent that experience it should be someone who is willing to learn quickly and who has organizational and leadership qualities. Exactly who becomes that person is up to the director, but it should be someone who can perform the task successfully. If necessary the director may want to assume that role initially, although that is not recommended. The director may also choose to fill these positions, temporally, with other elected ARRL officials, if necessary. The director may also be involved with developing a mechanism so that the **State Legislative Action Coordinator** or the **State Legislative Action Assistants** can communicate with members directly via e-mail. Ideally we would like to see a program that can run itself with a minimum of director or section manager time required.

State Legislative Action Coordinators in each of the fifteen ARRL divisions would ideally to be selected in consultation with the Section Manager(s). These **State Legislative Action Coordinators** will become cabinet members in each division. In some instances the director may want to designate more than one coordinator per state if that is seen as appropriate in large states with a great number of congressional representatives. Coordinators, as division cabinet members, will be kept in the picture and informed by the director at division cabinet meetings or whenever there is a need.

It will be the task of the **State Legislative Action Coordinator**, in consultation with the director, to develop a team of helpers or **Legislative Action Assistants**, to accomplish the mission of

getting the ARRL message to legislators. These assistants will also be expected to assist in implementing letter writing, emails and faxing underway to get action on ARRL's legislative agenda or particular bills. A key task of **Legislative Action Coordinator** and his team will be to bring about face to face meetings with key congressional committee members. This will usually mean the Commerce or Telecommunications Subcommittee, who represent voters in the state and have the power to influence the outcome of the bills of interest to us. Making these initial contacts is at the core of our grassroots campaign. These contacts, even if they are only with key aides rather than a Congressperson or Senator, will enable **our** Washington team to get a meeting with the key legislator and make an in depth presentation of the issues. In effect the "grassroots team" will be opening the door for President Jim Haynie, and others to deliver our message in Washington. The "grassroots team" will get us an audience in Washington. Without these involved constituents there is absolutely no reason for legislators to see us and listen to our issues. Only involved constituents can do this. It is assumed that all of those participating in the program will be registered voters as many times congressional staff check with the local Board of Elections to make sure those getting access are in fact active participants in the electoral process.