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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. TANCREDO).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 15, 2000.

I hereby appoint the Honorable THOMAS G. TANCREDO to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a concurrent resolution of the following title in which concurrence of the House is requested:

S. Con. Res. 112. Concurrent resolution to make technical corrections in the enrollment of the bill H.R. 434.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 106–173, the Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, appoints the following individuals to serve as members of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission—

the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN); and

Dr. Jean T.D. Bandler of Connecticut.

The message also announced that pursuant to sections 276d–276g of title 22, United States Code, as amended, the Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, appoints the following Senators as members of the Senate Delegation to the Canada-United States Interparliamentary Group during the Second Session of the One Hundred Sixth Congress, to be held in Mississippi and Louisiana, May 19–22, 2000—

the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY);

the Senator from Ohio (Mr. DEWINE);

the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. GRAMS);

the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS);

the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VOINOVICH);

the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY);

the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. BREAUX); and

the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. AKAKA).

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) for 5 minutes.

LOW POWER FM RADIO

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in response to today's front page story in The Washington Post entitled, ''Political static may block low power FM.'' The article paints a picture of what the new low power FM radio service may offer, but, Mr. Speaker, it does not properly convey why this Chamber, this House of Representatives, was compelled to overwhelmingly pass a bill introduced by my good friend, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. OXLEY). We did not pass a bill, as the article says, because of the influence of lobbyists or as a matter of politics. Quite simply, we passed a bill as a matter of good policy. That is why I am here this afternoon to point this out.

When the FCC commission began its journey by adopting a notice of proposed rule-making designed to establish low power FM service, many of us voiced concerns about the potential interference larger commercial and public stations would face from this service. Surely, the FCC would not undertake and implement a service on such an important point as this without testing to be sure that interference was not involved.

Well, our subcommittee of the Committee on Commerce earlier heard testimony that the FCC did just that, that they had not determined that no interference would occur between stations when they issued these low power FM licenses.

So we think the FCC has rushed to judgment without resolving this critical part, which is the interference issue without fully consulting with us. Even the FCC witness testifying before our committee could not explain why the commission, the FCC commission, did not measure interference using signal-to-noise ratios. Simply put, the five technical studies analyzing the interference issue caused by low power FM stations have produced conflicting conclusions regarding interference on the third adjacent channel. The FCC, nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, is pressing forward with its own agenda, all the while steamrolling over the legitimate concerns of existing broadcasters.

Instead, broadcasters who have invested millions and millions of dollars into stations with the assumption that the FCC would ensure the integrity of their spectrum now have to worry about interference from a project that the FCC has no idea whether it will work or not.

Examples of interference are already clear. Let us say all of us drive along the Beltway here in Washington near the intersection of I–66 and Route 50. We all know where that is. You can hear for yourself what third-adjacent

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

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channel interference sounds like. For there, two local FM radio stations, three channels apart, cross paths, and the interference is clear and apparent. That is the reality that we do not want to replicate in any sort of low power FM proceeding at the FCC. By dropping third channel interference rules, the FCC is creating an environment whereby it is clear that interference will increase. How much? The broadcast industry says a lot. The FCC, very little. So the question is who is right?

Well, now we are going to find out. The independent third party testing provisions of the legislation we passed in this House allow for a 9-month, nine-market analysis of low power FM. Not only will that analysis look at existing FM stations, but it will also analyze the impact on reading services for the blind, FM translators and the advent of digital radio. These are the issues that the FCC decided were not important, so it never tested any of them.

It is a shame that the FCC was not more aggressive in doing testing itself. After all, this agency is supposed to be the guardians of the spectrum. But by measuring distortion rather than using the internationally recognized standard for interference, the FCC cooked its own results in a way that allowed for it to move forward. That decision came even as Congress was out of town in January, as if our views on this subject did not matter. The fact is that low power FM is a symptom of this agency that does not recognize its responsibilities to Congress. This low power FM action is simply the latest in a series of FCC actions that call into question the whole notion of accountability at the FCC.

I am not opposed to low power FM. I do oppose the way in which the FCC decided to move forward, and I will be watching the results of the third party testing that this bill mandates to see if low power FM can, indeed, coexist with full power stations. The FCC appears to be bent on providing the service whether or not it causes interference or other problems for FM listeners. Our responsibility here in Congress is to those listeners, our constituents. I congratulate my colleagues in the House for passing legislation. I urge my colleagues in the Senate to do the same.

PROMOTING LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, all across America, people woke up this morning to front page stories in their communities about the Million Mom March against gun violence. There are pictures of the hundreds of thousands of people who gathered here on the Mall in Washington and other stories featuring the crowds in their hometowns in dozens and dozens of communities across America. I joined thousands of people for a march to Pioneer Square in Portland, Oregon yesterday. I do not know if there were a million moms or not.

Based on the reports that I have reviewed, it is likely that the hundreds of thousands here in Washington, D.C. and the tens of thousands in communities across the country could easily have reached or surpassed that number. The issue for me is not so much whether there were a million moms who marched, but the million moms who grieve.

In the last third of a century, over a million victims have been claimed by gun violence in the United States, more than the entire number of Americans lost in all the wars from the Civil War right through today. Yesterday's gathering was in memory of the million victims, though the testimony was not just of a million victims, but a million mothers, a million fathers, millions of brothers and sisters and grandparents whose lives were touched forever by gun violence.

The Americans who participated were not, in the main, advocates or activists. They were largely people who know that America can do better. They know that despite the opposition of the National Rifle Association to the Brady Bill, that America is safer because people with criminal records or a history of mental illness have been prevented by that Brady Bill from getting a half million guns.

They know that if these prohibitions were extended to people with a history of committing violent misdemeanors, that America would be safer still because these people are 15 times more likely to commit violence with weapons. They know that if we care enough as a Nation to make it harder for a 2-year-old to open a bottle of aspirin, then we can make it harder for that 2-year-old to shoot her sister. They know that the gun show loophole should in fact be closed, especially when they learn that the delay of a few hours for a certain category of people who are not cleared instantly, that these people are 20 times more likely to have the record of mental health problems or criminal records that are precisely the people we want to keep weapons away from.

The American public knows that we can succeed. In the 1960s, Congress and the auto industry, prodded by the public, began a war on traffic deaths that resulted in safer cars and tougher laws. In the 1980s, a mother who lost her child to a drunk driver decided to add her voice to that of many others, and MADD, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, was born, and the government was encouraged, some would say forced, to crack down on drunk driving.

As a result of all of these options, in the last third of a century, we have cut the death rate on our highways in half. The mothers march is a signal to people all over America that it is time for a similar effort to reduce gun violence in our communities.

Everybody knows that there is no single solution, but that there are many small steps that will save lives. If we in Congress are serious about listening to our constituents and making our communities more livable and safer, we have to start today. Why does the Speaker not direct the conference committee on juvenile crime, which has not met since last August, to meet now and address the simple, commonsense provisions to reduce gun violence that have already passed the Senate?

Action by this House would be an important sign that we can send to our constituents that we understand their concerns and we share their passion for saving families from unnecessary violence, making our communities more livable, our families safer, healthier and more economically secure.

TECHNOLOGY, THE NEW ECONOMY AND DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL AMERICANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate very much this opportunity today to talk about technology, the new economy and digital opportunity for all Americans, but let me begin by just sharing some statistics.

Over 100 million U.S. adults today are using the Internet, and seven new people are on the Internet every second. 78 percent of Internet users almost always vote in national, State and local elections, compared to 64 percent of nonInternet users. It took just 5 years for the Internet to reach 50 million users, much faster than traditional electronic media. In fact, it took 13 years for television to reach 50 million and radio, 38 years.

The Internet economy generated, just in the past couple of years, over $300 billion in revenue in 1998. It was responsible for creating 1.2 million jobs. Preliminary employment data now shows that the U.S. high technology industry employed 4.8 million workers in 1998, making it one of our Nation's largest industries, in fact, larger than steel, auto and petroleum combined. In 1997, the high tech average wage was 77 percent higher than the average U.S. private sector wage.

I am proud to say I represent the great State of Illinois, what some call the land of Lincoln. People often do not think of Illinois as a technology center, but it is. In fact, Illinois ranks third today in technology exports and fourth in technology employment. But clearly, Illinois is one of the top 10 cyber States, as some would say, a major State that is producing new technology and new ideas.

I have talked with many over the years, over the last few years, in particular, about what it takes and why