

dates set out in 603(b) for the Federal Communications Commission to make annual findings and report to Congress on INTELSAT's progress toward privatization have been advanced to reflect the fact that longer transition periods are not needed. Thus, the first Commission finding is required on or before January 1, 2000.

Furthermore, given the fact that over a year has elapsed since passage of H.R. 1872, the number of annual findings has been reduced from four to three, with the second finding of H.R. 1872 now included in the first annual finding, as set out in section 603(b)(2). The last finding is due January 1, 2002, which is later than the April 1, 2001 date established for INTELSAT privatization. It may be appropriate to make the FCC finding date the same as the privatization date of April 1, 2001 at the next stage in the legislative process.

Finally, there have been changes in the dates by which the privatized INTELSAT and Inmarsat must conduct initial public offerings of their shares; from January 1, 2001 to April 1, 2001 for INTELSAT, and from January 1, 2000 to April 1, 2000 for Inmarsat.

Section 624 deals specifically with Inmarsat. While there already have been some changes in the Inmarsat structure and some provisions of this section may need to be adjusted, such as the reference to the Inmarsat Signatory, this section is still applicable. While Inmarsat has conducted what it deems to be a privatization, that privatization has not been conducted in a pro-competitive manner.

Section 641 of H.R. 3261 ends the monopoly of COMSAT over access to the U.S. market for INTELSAT services. The Commission is to comply with section 641, by adopting orders ensuring the full implementation of all forms of direct access as provided in section 641(a).

Section 641 of H.R. 1872 dealt with various issues raised by ending COMSAT's exclusive access to INTELSAT and Inmarsat. We do not believe it necessary for the new section 641 to address these issues. First, given the changes at Inmarsat, and the provisions of other parts of the legislation dealing with Inmarsat, such as section 624(1), there is no need to specify direct access to Inmarsat in the new section 641. Second, it is appropriate to permit both non-investment, or contract, direct access (also known as Level 3) and investment (also known as Level 4) direct access to INTELSAT immediately upon the effective date of this legislation. All such direct access is in the public interest. It will increase competition for access to INTELSAT services and lower prices for consumers of INTELSAT services.

The Commission currently has the authority to pursue contract or Level 3 direct access. As was the case with respect to H.R. 1872, by including provisions on direct access in H.R. 3261, we do not intend to imply that there is a need to amend any provision of the Communications Satellite Act of 1962 to provide for direct access.

There are several other differences between H.R. 3261 and H.R. 1872 in section 641 regarding direct access. First, H.R. 3261 does not provide for or specifically authorize any signatory support costs. This is a change from H.R. 1872, which permitted compensation to INTELSAT signatories for support costs that the signatories would not otherwise be able to avoid under a direct access regime. Second, H.R. 3261 does not limit the ability of non-U.S.

signatories of INTELSAT to provide direct access in the United States. Thus the sections of H.R. 1872 dealing with signatory fees and foreign signatories, along with section 641(1)(A)(iii) regarding carrier pass through of savings realized as a result of direct access, were deleted.

H.R. 3261 does not grant the Commission authority to impose a signatory fee or limit direct access by foreign signatories nor should the statement indicating that the Commission has authority to implement direct access be interpreted as meaning that the Commission has the authority to impose signatory fee or limit direct access by foreign signatories.

New section 641 also does not direct the Commission to take action on COMSAT's petition to be treated as a non-dominant common carrier because the FCC already has acted on this petition. Furthermore, section 641(4), stating that direct access regulation would be eliminated after a pro-competitive privatization of INTELSAT or Inmarsat is achieved was unnecessary and thus was deleted.

H.R. 3261 does not include an equivalent of section 642 of H.R. 1872 dealing with the renegotiation of monopoly contracts, which is also known as "fresh look." The sections of H.R. 3261 following section 641 were renumbered to reflect the deletion of old section 642.

New section 649 is intended to prevent U.S.-licensed international carriers and satellite operators from using leverage they may have in foreign markets to exclude other U.S.-licensed international carriers and satellite operators from gaining access to those foreign markets. The effect of Section 649 is to apply this policy to all foreign satellite operators seeking to do business in the United States. Exclusive market access is a critical barrier to the provision of competitive satellite services by United States companies.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

CONGRATULATING SOUTH GRAND PRAIRIE HIGH SCHOOL

HON. MARTIN FROST

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 17, 1999

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate South Grand Prairie High for winning one of 13 New American High School awards from the Department of Education. This designation recognizes South Grand Prairie's tremendous efforts in raising academic standards and student achievement.

South Grand Prairie is a diverse high school of over 2,400 students. It reflects the changing demographics of the surrounding community, half of the student body comes from minority backgrounds. In 1996, South Grand Prairie undertook an extensive reform program to raise academic performance by the school's "middle majority," the large segment of the student body whose needs were not entirely being met. The high school created a full-academy model that incorporates Advanced Placement-level curricula with career-oriented programs.

Students at South Grand Prairie pursue a rigorous academic program in an area that best suits them—Business and Computer Technology, Creative and Performing Arts,

Health Science and Human Services, Humanities or Law, and Math, Science and Engineering. This allows students to raise their performance by capitalizing on their interests.

South Grand Prairie has enlisted the entire community in this effort. They have formed partnerships with local middle schools and area colleges. An Academic Advisory Board comprised of students, teachers, and prominent local business and industry leaders, has been formed to develop a curriculum and assessments of the program. And the Chamber of Commerce participates in a teacher-shadowing program which allows educators to understand the skills needed in the vocational areas in which they are teaching.

The results of this innovative program have been remarkable. South Grand Prairie has raised its students passage rate on Texas' state math exam by 18 percent. South Grand Prairie students pass the state's reading test at a 24 percent higher rate than the state average, and the school has higher SAT scores and rates of college enrollment than the state's average.

Clearly, South Grand Prairie's academic reforms have been a success, the school is highly deserving of the New American High School award. If South Grand Prairie represents the future in American education, the future looks bright indeed. Congratulations to Principal Roy Garcia and all of South Grand Prairie's students, faculty, and parents. Your school is a model for all of America's high schools and you have made North Texas proud. I am pleased to be able to join South Grand Prairie officials at their White House award ceremony this Friday.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 5TH ANNUAL COVENANT HOUSE WASHINGTON CANDLELIGHT VIGIL

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 17, 1999

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Covenant House Candlelight Vigil, where I will speak on Tuesday, December 4, 1999. The Vigil is a national event held every year in early December in some 20 cities across the country. The Candlelight Vigil symbolizes community hope for the well being of all our children and highlights the plight of homeless, runaway, and at-risk children.

The Vigil in Washington alone has 3,000 concerned adults and youth marching, bearing candles and flashlights in support of youth. They will march shoulder to shoulder for a quarter of a mile to the Covenant House Washington Community Service Center, setting a tone of joy, solidarity, commitment, and hope. Similar rallies are held simultaneously at Covenant House sites across the country.

Since its inception in 1995, Covenant House Washington has invested over \$13 million of private funding in our youth. They have given hundreds of youth a hand up by providing food, shelter, tutoring, life skills, job training, legal representation, and positive recreational opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in honoring Covenant House Washington and their commitment to our most vulnerable young people and in recognizing the 1999 Covenant House Washington Candlelight Vigil.