

Bob Dole



NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, September 23, 1994

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TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY

WASHINGTON -- Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole today issued the following statement on S. 1822, the Danforth-Hollings bill:

It is unfortunate that Senator Hollings declared the telecommunications issue dead for this year. Many of my colleagues know that in recent weeks both my staff and Senator Hollings' staff have tried to iron out many contentious issues. Yesterday, we presented Senator Hollings staff with a specific proposal to make the bill less regulatory, and more market-based. Although we did not hear back before Senator Hollings made his announcement, it is now apparent that those talks have failed.

It seems to me that S. 1822's major problems included its approach to universal service, its excessive regulation, its protectionist domestic content provisions, and its outlandish, if not unconstitutional, 5% set-aside requirements. And these were only a handful of the problems. With so little time, these issues needed to be resolved before the bill reached the floor.

Opposition to S. 1822 grew for many reasons. It increased local phone bills, government regulation, and stifled innovation. It was opposed by major national groups that included the National Governors Association, U.S. Conference of Mayors, National League of Mayors, and by many industry groups. With so little time, and over 250 differences between the House and Senate bills, it would have been a major feat to enact this legislation this year.

No doubt about it, this is an important issue. The communications industry is one of our nation's fastest growing and most vibrant industries. The best thing we could do for it is to adopt policies that allow competition, not government, to regulate it.

With that said, it is clear that the status quo is no longer acceptable. Of course, I have thought that for nearly a decade. Congress must assert its authority, and quickly, to resolve this issue. I am confident that a strong bipartisan proposal can be crafted and enacted into law early next year.

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SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER BOB DOLE

SEPTEMBER 23, 1994

STATEMENT ON

HOLLINGS-DANFORTH TELECOMMUNICATIONS BILL (S. 1822)

MR. PRESIDENT, IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT SENATOR HOLLINGS DECLARED THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS ISSUE DEAD FOR THIS YEAR. MANY OF MY COLLEAGUES KNOW THAT IN RECENT WEEKS BOTH MY STAFF AND SENATOR HOLLINGS' STAFF HAVE TRIED TO IRON OUT MANY CONTENTIOUS ISSUES. YESTERDAY, WE PRESENTED SENATOR HOLLINGS STAFF WITH A SPECIFIC PROPOSAL TO MAKE THE BILL LESS REGULATORY, AND MORE MARKET-BASED. ALTHOUGH WE DID NOT HEAR BACK BEFORE SENATOR HOLLINGS MADE HIS ANNOUNCEMENT, IT IS NOW APPARENT THAT THOSE TALKS HAVE FAILED.

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT S. 1822'S MAJOR PROBLEMS INCLUDED ITS APPROACH TO UNIVERSAL SERVICE, ITS EXCESSIVE REGULATION, ITS PROTECTIONIST DOMESTIC CONTENT PROVISIONS, AND ITS OUTLANDISH, IF NOT UNCONSTITUTIONAL, 5% SET-ASIDE REQUIREMENTS. AND THESE WERE ONLY A HANDFUL OF THE PROBLEMS. WITH SO LITTLE TIME, THESE ISSUES NEEDED TO BE RESOLVED BEFORE THE BILL REACHED THE FLOOR.

OPPOSITION TO S. 1822 GREW FOR MANY REASONS. IT INCREASED LOCAL PHONE BILLS, GOVERNMENT REGULATION, AND STIFLED INNOVATION. IT WAS OPPOSED BY MAJOR NATIONAL GROUPS THAT INCLUDED THE NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION, U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS, NATIONAL LEAGUE OF MAYORS, AND BY MANY INDUSTRY GROUPS. WITH SO LITTLE TIME, AND OVER 250 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE HOUSE AND SENATE BILLS, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A MAJOR FEAT TO ENACT THIS LEGISLATION THIS YEAR.

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, THIS IS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE. THE COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY IS ONE OUR NATION'S FASTEST GROWING AND MOST VIBRANT INDUSTRIES. THE BEST THING WE COULD DO FOR IT IS TO ADOPT POLICIES THAT ALLOW COMPETITION, NOT GOVERNMENT, TO REGULATE IT.

WITH THAT SAID, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE STATUS QUO IS NO LONGER ACCEPTABLE. OF COURSE, I HAVE THOUGHT THAT FOR NEARLY A DECADE. CONGRESS MUST ASSERT ITS AUTHORITY, AND QUICKLY, TO RESOLVE THIS ISSUE. I AM CONFIDENT THAT A STRONG BIPARTISAN PROPOSAL CAN BE CRAFTED AND ENACTED INTO LAW EARLY NEXT YEAR.

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