



Second Century

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The HR 1301 Push: How to Be Heard

“Now is the time for all good hams to come to the aid of the party.”
— With apologies to Charles E. Weller

As I write this column in the middle of August, summer is in full force in the Connecticut River Valley. By now, we are looking forward to the cooler days of September and October, when Congress will be in full force, and the Amateur Radio Parity Act will be the subject of legislative action. The Act under consideration by the House and, eventually, the Senate grants all of us the right to construct an effective antenna system, even where existing deed or homeowners' association restrictions prevent it. Autumn 2016 is our inflection point — we will either push forward and achieve passage in both houses of Congress, or lose the hard-won momentum and support we amassed. Your Advocacy Team has devoted 2½ years to reach this point. We have a narrow window of opportunity. And you have a part to play.

To recap progress to date — progress that one of our Directors described as coming farther than we had expected at the outset, farther than we have ever come before — the Parity Act began with the sponsorship of Rep Adam Kinzinger [R-IL] in mid-2014. Since then, the bill has gained wider support, garnering more than 125 bipartisan cosponsors. On July 13, the US House Committee on Energy and Commerce gave approval to a revised version of HR 1301. Approved by the committee, it is ready to be brought to the floor for a vote. Community Associations Institute (CAI), representing homeowners' associations nationally, opposed the bill as originally introduced. In order to propel the legislation forward, the ARRL legislative team conducted lengthy and spirited negotiations with CAI to draft an acceptable bill. Several steps remain if the current version is to become law. The legislation must be approved by the US House as a whole and forwarded to the Senate. The Senate must also approve the legislation if the bill will be presented to President Obama for his signature. Yes, the window narrows.

All of you can play the decisive role over the next 6 weeks in making HR 1301 a reality. A great deal is at stake: for the past 12 months, as ARRL members, you have been vocal in your support, prolific in your correspondence to Congress, and generous to ARRL's new Advocacy Fund. HR 1301's sponsors and cosponsors have kept faith with our initiative, in the face of organized resistance and in the context of other weighty issues occupying legislators. It's because the stakes are enormous now that we can't let our supporters down. We will not soon get the opportunity again. The next Congress may follow an entirely new agenda; our interests may have lower priority.

It's difficult to anticipate in August events that may transpire in the coming fall. But a number of tasks that ARRL members

prepare for now will accelerate HR 1301's passage. Only the timing of these tasks needs to be determined in the fall.

- First, go to the ARRL website and make sure that ARRL has your current e-mail address on file. This is easily done by clicking the yellow “Edit your Profile” link at the top of any ARRL web page, then clicking on the “Edit Account” tab. E-mail provides the most immediate and timely link to events unfolding. Please do it now, while you're thinking about it. If you're not an ARRL member, HR 1301 is compelling reason why you ought to be. Renew if you're lapsed.
- Second, expect to receive an e-mail link from a web-based application that we will use to communicate your comments to Congress almost instantaneously and at precisely the proper time. You will need to click on that link and fill out the template in order to utilize ARRL's powerful platform. We hope that the bill will pass the House of Representatives. Should that occur, we plan on beginning a major e-mail campaign to all US Senators in support of the bill.
- Third, watch the weekly ARRL Letter for updates. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. We'll keep you informed up-to-the-minute via these social media platforms. To prevail in this endeavor, we will need every member utilizing every advantage that second century technology offers. So please get in touch and stay in touch.

When we do this successfully, we will achieve two objectives. The first: persuade Congress that its constituents want HR 1301 to pass. The second: demonstrate to our legislators that our community is a thoughtful, constructive, engaged, and organized group whose views merit consideration. The second will have enduring, permanent impact.

In this digital age, it's easier than ever to contribute to making that impact. Nearly all of us have a keyboard at our disposal — on our computers, tablets, and even our phones. Perhaps you might practice Schoolmaster Weller's famous touch-type exercise for students, “Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the party.” How about a couple of turns of this phrase to limber up your fingers, then whip off a letter to your Senators in support of HR 1301? After all, “now is the time...”

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