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RM 9196

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To: A4.A4(FCCINFO)
Date: 2/27/98 2:15am
Subject: RM 9196 Morse Code Exemptions proposed by ARRL

As a disabled Amateur Operator, I would like to strongly urge the FCC to not adopt the policy advocated by the ARRL regarding Morse Code exemptions. Their proposal will place the disabled Amateur at a great disadvantage in obtaining an exemption. Their insistence on having access to private medical records is extremely disturbing, once the records are given to their VEC, there are not enough safeguards in place to prevent abuse or distribution of this sensitive information. There is a distinct possibility that the Morse Code requirements in the ITU treaty will be eliminated at the WRC 2001 conference making these changes unnecessary. I receive a small check each month and for me to afford even the most modest of stations takes great sacrifice. The cost of obtaining the necessary test and medical records almost puts an exemption out of my reach at present time and I am only one of many who are and will face not being able to upgrade in the future if the ARRL proposal is adopted.

RM 9196 is an insult to the disabled community. If the ARRL thinks a person is obtaining their exemption illegally then they can challenge that exemption and the person can be made to prove he or she deserves the exemption by obtaining more medical evidence. This would also make the ARRL more accountable for its actions since its VEC program now enjoys protection under U.S law. Recent releases by the ARRL have said most of us filing against this petition did not understand what they were trying to accomplish. I can assure the FCC, we do understand what is at stake and are prepared to take it to court if necessary to protect our rights. The ARRL almost manic defense of the outdated and obsolete Morse Code requirements is well known and they have turned a deaf ear to those they claim to be the voice of. It is just a long pattern of ignoring the needs of others and this proposal show the total disregard they have for the disabled as well as the opinions of non ARRL members.

I have discussed this matter at great link with many of my friends who are disabled and their is great consternation on their part regarding this matter. The FCC has a stated policy of making all technology easily available to the Disabled, by supporting this new ARRL policy to add further restrictions and cost to obtaining the Morse code Exemption, the FCC will be taking a giant step backwards from this stated policy.

I know that most proposals made by the ARRL are usually adopted by the FCC, who has a long working relationship with the ARRL regarding policy matters but this is one time I implore the FCC to go against the wishes of the ARRL and disapprove this proposal.



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