Proceeding: In the Matter of 1998 Biennial Regulatory Review -- Amendment of Part of the Record 1 of 1

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Good Morning,
I would like to comment on the proposed restructuring of the Amateur Radio License requirements. I support the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) proposal. I do so for the following reasons.

#1. I am a U.S. Army veteran. In 20+ years of living around the world, I have had the opportunity to observe and operate in many other countries. The proposal the ARRL has developed is close to the requirements that most of the world I have lived in has required of their Amateur Radio operators. Germany, for instance, requires 25 characters/min for the A class license, and 60 characters/min for the B class license. This is equivalent to 5 WPM and 12 WPM. Please note, however, that the United States is one of the few countries that makes use of its amateur operators for support of Military and disaster communications. Most other countries relegate the Amateur service to a hobby only status, and forbid such other communications.

#2. Under the ARRL proposal, no currently licensed operator will lose privileges. I believe that most licensed operators have gained experience since passing their test, and do not deserve to lose any privileges. The no-code tech license has shown that many operators do upgrade into the 5 or 13 wpm code requirements. In leu of the more difficult code requirement I do agree with a toughening of the technical requirements. I believe this is particularly important with the recent RF hazard rules, and the continued forward march of the state of the art.

#3. Simplifying the license structure is a good idea in concept. Four license classes instead of six will lower the workload by 33% in theory. In actual practice, the gain will be greater than 33%, since the majority of new licenses are in one of the lower 3 classes. (novice, no-code tech, or tech+). When those licenses are combined into class D (C for tech+) and the General is combined with the tech+ in class C, it will still leave a logical path of progression.

#4. Allowing Advanced license holders to participate in more of the VE testing is just a good idea. I do not believe it will produce any harm or cause any problem. On the other hand, it will make it possible for greater test availability in areas like the desert South West, where getting enough volunteers together between hamfests is difficult.

Thank you for your time.

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