

In my opinion, retention of the Morse requirement for HF access in the Amateur Radio Service is an absurd anachronism. It is a thing which belongs to another time, mindset, and technologic circumstance in communications. And also, I have repeatedly seen it become a stumbling block to perfectly good Technician class operators who simply don't have the 'ear' for the code despite having more than ample skills at other, more relevant aspects of Amateur Radio. Given the declining state of ham radio in the USA, having something in place which discourages use is an absurd and irresponsible idea.

I realize that there are a number of "know-code" types who vehemently insist that the Morse requirement is necessary to 'make good operators'. My experience, however, tells me that this is pure bunk. If their statements are true, then perhaps they will also be able to explain how all of these Morse-enabled 'good operators' have, for so many years, had so many clearly BAD operators within their ranks? Evidently, their arguments for the putative worth of the Morse requirement hold little water. There is also a group that feels that 'because I did it, they should too'. And I'll note that I've seen this selfsame argument applied to some other dubious things...fraternity hazing rituals come immediately to mind. Clearly, there is no point to the grouching of these misguided individuals, and I think the FCC would be ill-advised to follow any of their 'advice'.

That being said, I do support the retention of the 5 WPM Morse requirement for a single use, and that being as a requirement for the Extra Class license. Since this license class is one which deals with expanded technical proficiencies, it seems to make sense that if the 5 WPM bar is to be retained in any way, then it would be best utilized as a technical aspect for the vetting of expanded privileges on ALL bands, as opposed to one which poses a bar to HF usage. Also, the extra band segment 'elbow room' would then become a more attractive incentive to upgrading and, therefore, Morse proficiency even at this lowered degree.

Ultimately, Morse should be left to the Morse enthusiasts, of

which there are clearly some out there. It should not be something to be held against perfectly good Amateur Radio operators who have something to offer to the service as a whole while at the same time not sharing these peoples' enthusiasm for a very archaic mode of operation that sees little to no use in the rest of the modern communications world.