

==> ARRL SEEKS MEMBER SUPPORT FOR HR 2160

To support HR 2160 -- The Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Enhancement Act of 2009 -- the ARRL is asking its membership to contact their members of the US House of Representatives with a request to become co-sponsors of this significant piece of legislation

<http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111_cong_bill_s&docid=f:h2160ih.txt.pdf>.

"Getting a bill successfully through Congress is a formidable task -- one that is going to require the involvement of every ARRL member," said ARRL Regulatory Information Manager Dan Henderson, N1ND. "Working with our Washington consulting firm Chwat & Co, we are laying a dynamic approach that will allow us to make our case most effectively. We have developed a strategy to maximize our impact when dealing with each member of Congress."

Since the anthrax scare that followed the 9/11 attacks, all incoming mail to Congress is delayed anywhere from four to six weeks while it is screened. This means using normal US Mail is no longer an effective method of letting Congress hear your voice. While e-mail is convenient, it is also not effective, due to the large volume of e-mail that each Congressional office receives.

"To ensure that ARRL members' letters are quickly and expediently received by Congress, our strategy is to ask ARRL members send their letters directly to Chwat & Co," said Henderson. "Chwat's staff will sort the letters by Congressional district and hand-deliver them to the appropriate House offices, providing a direct point of contact with the Congressman and their staff. This personal contact gives us the chance to provide not only letters from constituents, but information from the ARRL on why this legislation is important."

The ARRL has provided a sample letter for League members to personalize and send to their Congressional representative <<http://www.arrl.org/news/files/DearMemberOfCongressHR2160.doc>>. "Personalized letters make a better impression than a standard form letter or petition," Henderson explained. You can find the name and address for your member of Congress on the ARRL Members Only Web page <<http://www.arrl.org/members-only/>>.

Once it has been personalized, ARRL members should send their letter to Chwat & Co using one of three methods:

- * As a signed attachment to an e-mail <arrl@chwatco.com>
- * As a signed fax to 703-684-7594
- * As a regular letter to John Chwat, Chwat & Co, 625 Slaters Ln, Suite 103, Alexandria, VA 22314

If you choose to e-mail your letter, please send it as an attachment to the e-mail instead of having it be the text of the e-mail. This allows the letter to be easily printed and delivered. Should you decide to draft your own letter supporting HR 2160 instead of editing the sample, Henderson asked that you please remember a couple of things:

- * Identify the bill by number and title: HR 2160 -- The Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Enhancement Act of 2009
- * Keep the letter brief and on topic -- one page at the most
- * Ask your congressional representative to consider becoming a cosponsor
- * Thank them for their consideration

"Simple is better when making this kind of request to a representative," said Henderson. "They and their

staff are looking to gauge interest and support for the bill. A lengthy letter that strays off-topic can detract from the focus of asking for support for the legislation."

Should you decide not to send your letter to Chwat & Co but directly to our Representative, it is still important to send a copy of your correspondence to Chwat & Co. This allows Chwat to discuss accurately with the Congressman and their staff the amount of support for the bill in each individual district. "There is strength in numbers," Henderson added.

Aside from bill sponsor Representative Sheila Jackson-Lee (TX-18), the ARRL is fortunate to already have six additional members of Congress who have signed on as co-sponsors of HR 2160 -- Madeleine Bordallo (Guam), Brett Guthrie (KY-2), Mary Jo Kilroy (OH-15), Zoe Lofgren (CA-16), Blaine Luetkemeyer, (MO-9) and Bennie Thompson (MS-2).

"We congratulate ARRL Great Lakes Division Director Jim Weaver, K8JE, and his grassroots legislative action team in Kentucky for securing the support of Representative Guthrie -- the first new co-sponsor of the bill," Henderson said. "It shows that our grassroots effort can work!"

You may be asking yourself "What should I do if my Representative has already signed on as a co-sponsor for HR 2160?" The answer is simple: Thank them for their support. If your Congressman is one of those listed as a co-sponsor, please send them a letter thanking them for their support. Use the same contact information for Chwat & Co. "It is important to convey your appreciation to your Representative when they sign on as a co-sponsor or support the bill," Henderson explained. "That simple 'thank you' may help open the door the next time their help is needed."

Once you have prepared and sent your letter supporting HR 2160, your job is not over: Feedback is an important part of the process. "What your Congressman has to say in regards to your contact can provide the ARRL with important information as we try to push our bill forward," Henderson noted. "This feedback can possibly help us identify potential new support for the bill or a weakness in the legislation we may need to address."

When you receive a response from your Congressman, please forward a copy to the Regulatory Information Office at ARRL Headquarters via e-mail <reginfo@arrl.org> or hard copy to Regulatory Information, ARRL, 225 Main St, Newington, CT 06111.

"HR 2160 presents the Amateur Radio Service with a unique opportunity -- but also carries with it the important responsibility of making your voice heard," Henderson summarized. "HR 2160 stands as the first step in trying to address the long standing problem of extending the protections afforded Amateur Radio operators under PRB-1 to deed restrictions and covenants <http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/regulations/PRB-1_Pkg/prb-1.pdf>. To be clear, passing HR 2160 is not going to achieve that goal right away. But it will help lay the ground work by assessing the impact such restrictions have on our ability to train for and respond to disasters and other emergencies."