

Grassroots Legislative Action Committee Plan January 2005

A quick read through *200 Meters and Down* will show that our first president, the Old Man, Hiram Percy Maxim was a master at legislative action, able to leap entrenched opposition to accomplish the almost impossible. When he came to Washington in 1925 to plead Amateur Radio's case and fight off those who would grab our frequencies, the Navy Department in that case, he had the attention of key legislative insiders. While he may not have been able to accomplish this in a single bound; he was successful in getting the job done. Political action was certainly part of the Old Man's culture. But then he had a lot more going for him than most of us. He came from a wealthy, well-known family and was part of a large manufacturing business and thus well able to get the ear of Washington leaders and legislators. His family had invented the Maxim machine gun, which at that time was considered a weapon of mass destruction having taken so many lives in what we now know as World War One. While old Hiram has long since passed away the problems and the enemies of Amateur Radio have not gone away over the years. The threats are real and still there, only different and perhaps larger.

Today, unfortunately, we do not have anyone quite like Old Hiram to come to our aide. While the ARRL Board and its officers and full time staff in Newington are well aware of the problems facing our great service we do not have the direct access to Washington leaders and legislators that the Hiram had. We also realize that there has been a change in the way government, the legislative process and politics work in the new century. No longer is the FCC alone deciding the fate of Amateur Radio. There was a time when good technical arguments to the FCC could win the day for us. Congress over the last decade has involved itself more directly in spectrum and communications matters. Now, in Twenty First Century, the President and the Executive Branch have become involved. Politics has raised its head. In an ideal world that would not be so. We find now that we must engage in the political/legislative as a pragmatic solution to protect our spectrum from pollution and grabs by business interests.

In order to have our voice heard today we need to Maximize our effort, pun intended, by using our largest resource, our members to bring our needs, concerns, and issues before congressional representatives and senators. While we may not have any one ARRL member with the "political clout" of Hiram or Senator Barry Goldwater, we do have many political savvy members within our ranks. Our members, who vote and are constituents, are a great resource, which can help overcome the well-financed opposition we frequently face. We need simply to identify them, brief them, and then let them begin to open the doors to the key federal legislators who can help us. In short, we need a Grassroots Lobbying effort to energize our members to help get our message to Washington legislators. We believe our members are up to the task.

Currently we are not set up to do that in any formal way. While we have positions in the Field Service Bureau – State Government Liaison, and Local Government Liaison – these

positions are really designed to cover state initiatives, such as license plate bills and antenna legislation, or local efforts such as Field Day proclamations or zoning board appeals. We don't want to further burden these volunteers and there is no direct link to them through the ARRL Board.

Our Grassroots Legislative Action Committee is a national effort rather than a state effort. Yes, it will be conducted in states but it is in reality a federal effort on a national scale directed by ARRL Board policy decisions. The goals will always be to effect some change or action on a federal level in Washington, DC rather than a state capitol. As the ARRL Board meets at least twice a year and is briefed at that time by our ARRL President, our Executive Vice-President, ARRL General Council, and our Washington lobbyist, John Chwat, it seems only correct that the ARRL Board should oversee this effort. The fifteen ARRL directors are kept directly in the loop through these face-to-face meetings. Our ARRL Section managers have no similar face to face meeting with these key officers and staff.

The Committee believes also that Section Managers and their SLG's and LGL's are already heavily burdened and should not be given this additional task. Additionally directors already have a heavy workload.

The Section Manager in Grassroots Lobbying

Since the ARRL grassroots lobbying effort is being coordinated at the division level, the Section Manager should be utilized primarily in a support role. While being kept informed of grassroots lobbying efforts that affect the section, the Section Manager can add value to the effort in the following ways.

- 1) Assist the division level coordinators in the recruitment effort when a call goes out for members to fill volunteer positions.
- 2) Educate the section level cabinet members on the status of lobbying efforts so that they can contribute as needed and assist with recruitment and member educational efforts.
- 3) Keep membership informed of grassroots lobbying efforts through usual avenues of contact.
- 4) Encourage coordinated grassroots lobbying efforts by fostering communications between interested groups within the section.

The Specifics of the Program

We therefore propose an entirely new and separate mechanism to accomplish this vital national lobbying mission to be overseen by either the Executive Committee or a permanent **Legislative Action Committee**. We see the need for a:

1. **Division Legislative Action Chair** – one in each division – becomes a division cabinet member
2. **Legislative Action Coordinator** – at least one in each **state** – becomes a cabinet member
3. **Legislative Action Assistants** – a number assisting the state coordinator

We propose the creation of a **Legislative Action Chair** in each division to implement “grassroots lobbying” for the ARRL legislative program, which at this point includes a BPL initiative and two different bills in Congress. The division director will designate this individual who will then implement the program of grassroots actions explained below. Ideally this individual would already have had some experience with lobbying activities, having been involved through business, professional, or union membership with similar grassroots groups. Absent that experience it should be someone who is willing to learn quickly and who has organizational and leadership qualities. Exactly who becomes that person is up to the director, but it should be someone who can perform the task successfully. If necessary the director may want to assume that role initially, although that is not recommended. The director may also choose to fill these positions, temporally, with other elected ARRL officials, if necessary. The director may also be involved with developing a mechanism so that the **Legislative Action Coordinator** or the **Legislative Action Assistants** can communicate with members directly via e-mail. Ideally we would like to see a program that can run itself with a minimum of director time required.

Legislative Action Coordinators in each of the fifteen ARRL divisions would ideally to be selected in consultation with the Section Manager(s). These **Legislative Action Coordinators** will become cabinet members in each division. In some instances the director may want to designate more than one coordinator per state if that is seen as appropriate in large states with a great number of congressional representatives. Coordinators, as division cabinet members, will be kept in the picture and informed by the director at division cabinet meetings or whenever there is a need.

It will be the task of the **Legislative Action Coordinator**, in consultation with the director, to develop a team of helpers or **Legislative Action Assistants**, to accomplish the mission of getting the ARRL message to legislators. These assistants will also be expected to assist implementing letter writing, emails and faxing underway to get action on ARRL’s legislative agenda or particular bills.

The key task of Legislative Action Coordinator and his team will be to bring about face to face meetings with key congressional committee members. This will usually mean the Commerce or Telecommunications Subcommittee members (Level I and II), who represent voters in the state and have the power to influence the outcome of the bills of interest to us. Making these initial contacts is at the core of our grassroots campaign. These contacts, even if they are only with key aides rather than a Congressperson or Senator, will enable our Washington team to get a meeting with the key legislator and make an in depth presentation of the issues. In effect the “grassroots team” will be opening the door for our ARRL President,

officers and other staff to deliver our message in Washington. The “grassroots team” will get us an audience in Washington. Without these involved constituents there is absolutely no reason for legislators to see us and listen to our issues. Only involved constituents can do this. It is assumed that all of those participating in the program will be registered voters as many times congressional staff check with the local Board of Elections to make sure those getting access are in fact active participants in the electoral process.

Additional these same volunteers can be used also to help generate visits to other congressional offices and letter writing campaigns, when needed, for legislative issues.

Duties for Division Directors

- Appoint a Division Legislative Action Chair and Congressional Coordinators
- The “Chair” and “Coordinators” will serve as direct contact for the Division. Director to identify ARRL connections with Tier I (House and Senate Telecom jurisdiction) Tier II (Congressional Leadership) and Tier III congressional targets. Division Directors and or Division Legislative Chairs can consult with the lobbying firm, Chwat & Co on all matters relating to this project.
- Provides Legislative “Chairs” and “Coordinators” with meeting report form (attached) and other materials provided by Chwat & Company, Inc. or obtained through the ARRL web resources.
- Chwat & Company, Inc. will follow up when appropriate with Congressional contacts and implement all activities relating to staff both in the Washington, DC and District offices.
- Division Directors or their designated Legislative Chairs and Coordinators are points of contact for Chwat & Company, Inc. for any follow up Contacts in House and Senate Members and Staffs.

Duties of the Division Legislative Action Chairs

- * Inform HQ of contacts or visits using the “contact forms.”
- Identify ARRL connections within the Division with Tier I, Tier II and Tier III House and Senate Members. This will encompass who has contacts, and what type of connection they have with that office.
- Chwat & Company, Inc. will provide the Legislative Chairs with appropriate materials for District Contacts before they make their presentations, staff contacts and assist on any questions relating to contacts with Congressional targets.
- Legislative Chairs will make sure a report is submitted on all Congressional contacts back to ARRL Leadership, District Director and Chwat & Company, Inc. with the appropriate “Congressional Contact Report Form.”

Duties of the Legislative Action Coordinators:

- Arrange contacts with Congressional Members in their District offices.
- Make sure that only two to three ARRL members are in the contact group

- Make sure that the contact group is prepared with a scrip and understands the focus of the visit
- Attend the meeting when possible with prepared information on the ARRL issue
- Fill out Congressional Contact Report Form and brief Division Chairs, ARRL Leadership or Chwat & Co staff if requested about the meeting.

Mission Statement for Contacts

The grassroots program we envision needs to be carefully controlled and focused. Participants need to be clear that they are helping us carry the message; they are not determining or composing the message. We need to be clear about this.

The ARRL Executive Committee will determine the focus of the ARRL Grassroots Program. That committee will determine the issues to dealt with, the message we want to send, and when and to whom we want to send it. In effect the EC will develop a mission statement or a set of goals or outcomes we hope will be achieved as a result of these contacts.

The Executive Committee will have oversight over the Grassroots Program.

Chain of Command or Control

Once a strategy has been developed, decided or modified by the ARRL officers, the Executive Committee in association with Chris Imlay and John Chwat, a message will be sent to BOTH the OD or the ODV and the Grassroots Reflector. This way the Directors and their Division Chairs and State Coordinators will all get the message at almost the same time and be able to act on the information in a timely fashion. We feel we need to avoid a cumbersome relay system.

Pre Contact Forms - will be available in the Grassroots area on the ARRL web

As soon as the Division Legislative Action Chair is assigned and assumes the position a pre contact form should be filled out and sent to those listed on the form.

We are very interested in exactly who will be making contact with the tier I and tier II legislators we have targeted. It is very important that we know who is making these contacts and exactly whom they are planning to speak to. Contact needs to be controlled. In many cases John Chwat will want to contact the individuals making the visit.

We do not want unauthorized contacts to take place, as these well meaning individuals may not send the message we want. It will be an important task of the chair and the coordinator to make sure that only one team makes contact with a congressional office. Multiple contacts will eventually lead to confusion and delay in sending our message and must be avoided.

The Congressional Action Coordinator in the state or, should there be more than one in the state, the one responsible for that congressional district will decide, after consultation

with John Chwat, who makes the contact. It needs to be clear at all times to the congressional staff exactly who is the spokesman for ARRL's position. In the case of senate contacts in states where there is more than one division such as California, New Jersey and New York the two Directors will have to determine who makes contact after consulting with John Chwat.

The goal here will always be to get the best team or individual to make the contact and present our issues.

Post Contact Forms – will be available in the Grassroots area on the ARRL web

It is vital that these forms be filled out immediately after a visit and sent to all those listed. John Chwat will need to know that the contact has taken place so that he can make reference to the meeting when he or a member of his staff met with the Washington congressional staff members. John Chwat and his staff will need to be aware of each contact made in a timely fashion as his office will be following up with visits with the Washington office staff. The program will not be successful unless this procedure is followed.

A Script for Visits

Most professional groups and unions provide their member volunteers with scripts for visits and phone calls. Unless you have done this many times it is helpful and in most cases necessary. We will also suggest leave behind material.

The Chwat staff will develop these scripts to help our volunteers to be successful. A suggested scrip can be personalized to cover the specific visits. A script is also a means of insuring that the points and issues we want raised are covered. But most importantly it gives the group meeting with the key legislators the necessary confidence to be successful.

Membership Lists by Congressional Districts

Initially we will be concerned only with a short list of Tier One and Tier Two contacts identified by John Chawat, but as the program enlarges and gets up to speed we will need to cover most, if not all, congressional districts and all US Senators. Please remember that this is not a one-issue program but a permanent program designed to get our legislative program implemented. HQ staff can become quite busy generating lists of members by congressional district. We are working on making this data available on the web in a secure area similar to the current ODV and SM areas - the grassroots area.

Security Issues

Access to the Grassroots web area will be controlled as it is now within the ODV area. Only directors, vice directors, and grassroots chairs and coordinators will have access

These “lists” will enable the chairs and coordinators to know which of our members are in a position to provide access as constituents. It will help us recruit for the program.

A Web Area for Grassroots Chairs and Coordinators

Secure access as with ODV or SM sections limited to these volunteers only.

It will also be helpful if we provide a library of files and information for these volunteers on the web with the files already provided by John Chwat and the Ad Hoc Grassroots Congressional Lobbying Committee. We should also provide links to both the Walter Cronkite and the BPL video in this area, plus the BPL leave behind. These will all be helpful if employed during a congressional visit or as a leave behind, or both. The report form developed by John Chwat should also be available here along with a clear explanation of how it is to be used and who and how it is to be sent.

Some of the material to be available there will be:

Pre Contact Forms

Post Contact Forms

Contact Forms

Visit scripts

Mission Goals

Chwat Material – BPL Lobbying and Congressional Visits

Links to Walter Cronkite and BPL videos

Links to BPL area and material

PDF files of APCO and NIPSTIC filings, ARRL filings on BPL and NTIA filings

BPL leave behind

PDF copy of ARRL’s legislative program – we may have to develop this – as a hand out or leave behind. One page for each of our three issues, BPL, Spectrum Protection and CC&R legislation.

A Nationwide Reflector for all Chairs and Coordinators

It will be helpful to have a reflector for all the chairs and coordinators to receive and share information. We anticipate that this will only be a good medium for them to share information but also to hone skills and develop scripts to be used at meetings with key legislators or their staff members. Absent expensive face to face meetings for those volunteers involved in the grassroots program this reflector will serve as both a monitoring system and a training medium. We expect that most of the members of the ad hoc committee and John Chwat and his staff will be participating in the reflector. We may also want to assign a moderator for the reflector.

This group will be quite large with some fifteen chairs and more than fifty coordinators (remember some large states will have more than one coordinator) for a group of perhaps seventy-five. For this reason we do not want to open the reflector to assistants.

The coordinators in individual states may want to create their own closed reflectors to relay information to their groups.

It would also be appropriate for members of this ad hoc committee to be members of this reflector as moderators.

This will be implemented as soon as there is a software update for our reflectors.

Monthly Summary of Activity

We recommend a one-paragraph summary of visits and activities from John Chwat sent to Dave Sumner to be posted on the ODV and SM reflectors, and sent to Rick Linquist to keep members informed of the progress of the program and its successes. This summary can also be posted to the Grassroots Reflector for chairs and coordinators to read. We suggest that old summaries be made available in the web area.

A Dayton ARRL Grassroots Forum in 2005

The ARRL National Convention in 2005 will be a great opportunity for many of the chairs and coordinators to meet and network at Dayton. We should endeavor to develop an interesting and informative program and networking opportunity for these volunteers.

The Grassroots Legislative Action Committee would like to remain active for at least the first year of the implementation of the program so as to be able to offer constructive suggestions or modification.

The ARRL Ad Hoc Legislative Action Committee

Directors: Frank Fallon, **N2FF**, Hudson Division - Chairman

Jim Weaver, **K8JE**, Great Lakes Division -

Vice Directors: David Woolweaver, **K5RAV**,

Section Managers: Ed Bruette, **N7NVP**, Western Washington

Roy C Rabey III, **AD5KZ**, North Texas

ARRL Public Relations Firm: John Chawt

ARRL General Council: Chris Imlay, **W3KD**