



POSITION PAPER

FAIRNESS DOCTRINE

I am opposed to any resurrection of the “The Fairness Doctrine,” the 1940’s law that effectively censored political talk radio for many years, because it is a violation of the First Amendment and limits Free Speech. The real issue here is not what you “are able to” see or hear, which is what the Fairness Doctrine was about originally. It’s about placing limitations on the Freedoms you currently have to “choose” what to see or hear. In the 1940’s and 50’s, Americans had few choices with only three major networks and there was some validity to the Fairness Doctrine. Today, Americans have an almost unlimited choice of where to get their information: regular TV, cable TV, regular radio, satellite radio, internet, web-blogs, etc., which makes the Fairness Doctrine unnecessary. I believe that it was the collapse of the radio station “Air America” a Liberal talk station, that has led to this attempt to re-introduce the Fairness Doctrine as a form of de facto censorship. It appears that if certain political views can’t compete in the world of ideas, then the solution is to pass a law that forces radio stations to air those views.

The right of Free Speech guarantees that people or organizations have the right to express their ideas without danger of censorship, interference or punitive action by the government. It does not mean that people or organizations with different views must be provided with a meeting hall, a radio station or a printing press through which to express their ideas. Those who value the First Amendment, as I do, must oppose the Fairness Doctrine as a serious threat to their Freedom of Speech.

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