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ATR Applauds the President's entry into fight over Fairness Doctrine

President encourages Members of Congress to sign onto Discharge Petition

Washington, DC- President George W. Bush today ventured into the fight over the so-called fairness doctrine, the push by some to regulate political content on America's airwaves.

Speaking today in Nashville at the National Religious Broadcasters Convention, the President spoke of the importance of the Broadcaster Freedom Act, introduced in the House by Congressmen Mike Pence (R-IN) and Greg Walden (R-OR), and how the bill would protect free speech from politically motivated federal regulators who would determine what met the standard for "fair." The BFA would permanently repeal the "fairness doctrine" from the books.

"This has to be one of the more ironically named regulations in the history of the US," said Grover Norquist, President of Americans for Tax Reform. "Absolutely nothing about it is 'fair,' in fact, it's quite possibly the most unfair regulation in the history of the communications market."

The "fairness doctrine" would require radio stations offer equal time to opposing view points, essentially making unelected federal bureaucrats the program director of all talk radio stations with the power to impose sanctions against stations how fail to comply with their definition.

"The effect of the 'fairness doctrine' would be to silence political speech, not advance it, which may well be why some in Congress are pushing for its return," Norquist continued. "Conservative voices thrive in the free market of talk radio, and that bothers some people who oppose conservative ideals, so they're attempting to use regulation to accomplish what they couldn't in the marketplace: to silence critics. That should bother everyone."

The efforts of Congressmen Pence and Walden should be applauded and supported. They have 194 signatories on the discharge petition to force a vote on this issue, they need 218. Every one of the 309 Members of Congress who voted last year for a one year ban of the 'fairness doctrine' will either sign the discharge petition or risk exposing themselves as hypocrites, saying they are for free speech, but refusing to act to preserve it when they have the chance."

Americans for Tax Reform is a non-partisan coalition of taxpayers and taxpayer groups who oppose all tax increases. For more information or to arrange an interview please contact John Kartch at (202) 785-0266 or by email at jkartch@atr.org.

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