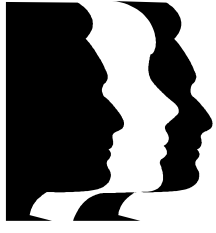


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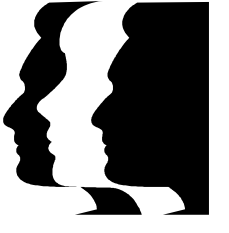


The People News

OF BRADLEY COUNTY

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DECEMBER

VOL 11 ISSUE 11

2008

President-Elect Attacks First Amendment

Democrats want to bring back the Fairness Doctrine to stifle conservative talk radio's criticism

By Jack Thompson

www.humanevents.com/article.php?print=yes&id=29566

Obama's New 'Fairness Doctrine'

Get ready for an unprecedented government assault upon the First Amendment. President Obama will be at the heart of it using his version of the "Fairness Doctrine."

In 1949, the Federal Communications Commission created the "Fairness Doctrine," which mandated that federally-licensed radio and television stations "provide a reasonable opportunity for the presentation of contrasting viewpoints" on "vital important controversial issues." Rather than be deluged with demands for airtime by aggrieved listeners, the broadcasters generally

opted not to cover controversial issues, thereby leaving the public less informed. In 1987, President Reagan's FCC jettisoned the Fairness Doctrine, and conservative talk radio grew like topsy, unencumbered by the logistical nightmare of determining what is "controversial" and what is "fair." Rush Limbaugh's meteoric, syndicated rise is directly attributable to this re-

peal, as radio stations were freed to air what listeners wanted to hear without airing what few wanted to hear. If you think that's unfair, check out how Air America is doing.

Limbaugh even today correctly says, "Don't ask me for equal time; *I am equal time*. I am the rebuttal to the liberal, mainstream, drive-by media."

With the Democrats now set to control the Presidency and both houses of Congress, Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Reid say they want to bring back the Fairness Doctrine to stifle conservative talk radio's criticism of the Democrats.

Barack Obama, however, in June 2008, stated that he opposes bringing back the Fairness Doctrine, through his Press Secretary Michael Ortiz: "He considers this debate to be a distraction from the conversation we *should* be having about *opening up the airwaves and modern communications to as many diverse viewpoints* as possible." [emphasis added]

Obama knows that exhuming the Fairness Doctrine would be a frontal assault upon the First Amendment that would evoke a Boston Tea Party-like response from listeners of Limbaugh, Hannity, Ingraham, Beck, and other conservative talk hosts who would be dropped rapidly from many if not all stations. Glenn Beck has warned that if the Fairness Doctrine comes back, he'll be off the air.

Obama is way smarter than

that. What he has in mind is an indirect and far more means to accomplish the demise of conservative talk - America's last town hall.

The analogy is to the proverbial frog in the pot of water. Put him into boiling water, and out he'll hop. Instant Boston Tea Party. Here, then, is the Obama plan to slow cook the First Amendment:

Charles Benton is Chairman of the Benton Foundation, with offices in Obama's Chicago as well as in Obama's Washington. Benton proclaims at his Foundation's web site, "[O]ur number one national communications policy priority must be the *eradication* of racial and gender discrimination in media and telecommunications. Our shared goal: seeing the day when all Americans possess the tools to compete in commerce, to contribute to and enjoy the fruits of democracy, to receive *unbiased* and uncensored news and information, to *create our culture*." [emphasis added]

The Federal Communications Commission has a vague rule called "localism," which requires stations to serve the interests of their local communities in order to hold onto their broadcast licenses. Obama, who gets to replace FCC Chairman Kevin Martin right away, needs only three votes from the five-member FCC to define localism his way.

Jim Boulet, Jr., the head of

English First in Washington, D.C., one of whose projects

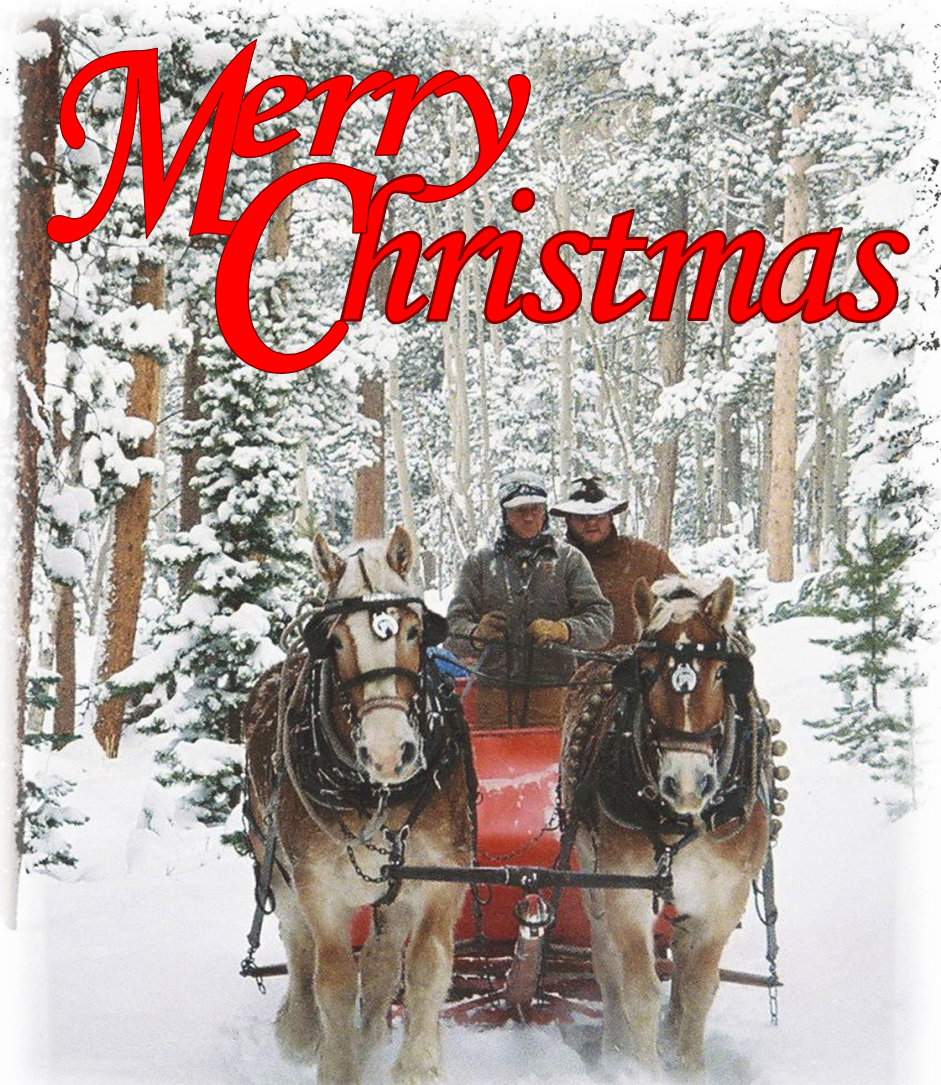
is www.keeprushontheair.com has been studying and warning for months about the morphing of FCC localism. Boulet notes to Human Events the following:

- On September 20, 2007, Obama submitted a pro-localism written statement to an FCC hearing at the Chicago headquarters of Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr.'s Operation Push. One month later, an insistent Obama sent a public letter to Chairman Martin stating, "The Commission has failed to further the goals of diversity in the media and promote localism."

- The head of Obama's transition team is John Podesta, President and CEO of the Center for American Progress. In 2007, the Center issued a report, *The Structural Imbalance of Political Talk Radio*, which concluded there were too many conservatives on the radio because of "the absence of localism in American radio markets" and urged the FCC to "[e]nsure greater local accountability over radio licensing."

- Podesta's choice as head of the FCC transition team is Henry Rivera, a Director and General Counsel of the above-noted Benton Foundation and chairman of the Minority Media Telecommunications Council, which has stated:

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