

The Sandy Post

Editorial & Opinion

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Comment

Telephone system
can remain efficient

by SENATOR BOB PACKWOOD

Fear and confusion about changes in telephone service and rising telephone rates are among the top problems that Oregonians have recently communicated to me.

The confusion stems from a variety of factors that are transforming the telephone industry, and from a Federal Communications Commission decision that is changing the ground rules. The effect of the FCC action is to shift the financial burden of supporting the country's telephone network from the big long distance users to the residential and small business customers. Therefore, you can expect your local phone bill to rise.

The telephone rates problem is the first item the Senate will take up when Congress reconvenes Jan. 23. Congress must act to help ensure that rising phone bills do not force people to give up their telephones. We must not allow the deterioration of our country's universal telephone network.

The Senate will debate the telephone legislation introduced last July to help consumers and small businesses in several ways, including:

- Blocking a monthly "access fee," which would increase yearly, on all residential and single-line small business phones.

- Keeping local telephone rates as reasonable as possible.

- Offsetting costs of telephone service for the poor, elderly, handicapped, or rural residents.

- Maintaining America's universal telephone network.

The so-called access fee, decided by the FCC, would shift approximately \$11 billion onto consumers' phone bills beginning April 3.

Although the charge is supposedly for access to long distance, the fee will appear on your bill even if you never make a long distance call. The \$2 monthly fee for residential phones in 1984 is to rise to about \$10 a month, or \$120 a year, by 1990. The flat fee for all businesses, whether a billion-dollar conglomerate or a mom and pop grocery store, will be \$6 a month.

The Senate bill, S. 1660, bars the charges on residential and one-line small business phones for at least two years. The bill requires the FCC in 1985 to report its intentions, regarding any access fees, to the Senate Commerce Committee that I chair. If we do not agree with the plans, we will draft legislation directing the agency to do something that better serves the public interest.

It is unfair and ironic to make consumers bear most of the high costs of keeping down their own residential local rates. These costs should continue to be where they have always been and where they belong — on the huge companies.

The legislation will help keep local rates as low as possible by continuing the policy of using long distance revenues to cushion local rates. Because major corporations are by far the main users of long distance, it is only fair that they continue to bear most of these costs.

The large businesses — not small businesses or consumers — will also con-

tribute to a "Universal Service Fund." The fund will be used to offset the costs of providing telephone service to poor people and to residents of rural or remote areas.

Congress must help protect individuals from being forced, by rising rates, to relinquish their phone service, a vital part of their lifestyle. This is especially important for the elderly, handicapped or unemployed people. For them, the telephone is a crucial necessity.



Bob Packwood

In Oregon, the average basic telephone residential rate is expected to rise from \$12.50 in 1983 to \$17 in 1984, and to about \$29 by 1990, according to estimates released by the Oregon Public Utility Commission. The figures represent about a 35 percent rise in 1984 and about a 130 percent rise by 1990 — even without the FCC's fees.

Although our legislation does not directly affect state public utility rate decisions, the bill does stop the federal charge you would have to pay over and above state-approved rate increases.

S. 1660 also indirectly helps in regard to rate requests pending before state public utility commissions. A group of state public utility commissioners told a Capitol Hill press conference last October that unless Congress passes legislation to hold down local rates, state regulators will be forced to approve at least 60 percent of about \$9 billion in pending rate increase requests.

The most recent support for legislation to block the access fees came in a resolution passed this month by the National Association of Attorneys General at their winter meeting.

I particularly appreciate the support for S. 1660 that Oregon Fair Share, Gray Panthers, Communications Workers of America, Farmers Union and all other groups showed at their Portland rally last November.

Our bill can help your telephone bill and can help maintain the country's affordable, efficient, universal telephone system.

Packwood, an Oregon Republican, is chairman of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee.

Letter to the editor

Precedent may be set
in church school case

I wonder if people think that we are receiving all the news that we should from our national news media?

When we lose our local newspaper, we lose our freedom of the press. We need to support our local newspapers and try to help them cover different news items that they may not know about.

Example...

In Louisville, Nebraska, today we have seven fathers in jail. They have been there since November 23. Their wives are in hiding for fear of also being arrested. The fact brings us to one conclusion: The First Amendment lies dead, at least in Louisville, Nebraska. Why?

The Nebraska Christian School problem began in 1977 when Everett Silven, pastor of the Faith Baptist Church of Louisville, Neb., established a Christian school as an integral part of his church and did not seek a license from the state Department of Education. The state of Nebraska took legal action to close Pastor Silven's school. The case went all the way to the state Supreme Court. Many believed that the state Supreme Court would decide in favor of religious freedom, but to our great shock the court decided against Faith Baptist Church.

The reasons the school refuses to employ state certified teachers are: First, there is no guarantee such teachers will provide the God-centered education the parents and pastors demand. Second, state-certified teachers have been required to take educational courses which, where they are not worthless are imbued with the values of secular humanism, a recognized philosophy of life the Faith Christian

church considers heretical doctrine.

When the students from this school were tested, they test out one to three years ahead of the state norm in Nebraska.

It is not only Baptists who are involved in the Christian school conflict in Nebraska. There are also Church of God, Pentecostals, Mennonites, and the Amish involved.

Millions of parents are fed up with judicial meddling in education with a scholastic overemphasis on equalitarianism, with the lack of discipline in the schools, with rampant teacher incompetence. They are fed up with biology courses that teach evolution as proven fact, with history courses that fail to highlight American heroes or incalculable patriotic values, with sex education courses bereft of moral content, with values clarification courses that are nothing but premiers in moral relativism.

They want for their children the same traditional education they and their parents had, and that one fine day Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren declared unconstitutional.

What we can and must do is insist that our Congressmen, and Senators, look into this civil rights violation in Nebraska.

Call Congressman Denny Smith, Senator Bob Packwood and Senator Mark Hatfield.

Remember, the outcome of the Faith Baptist Church case will set a precedent across America, for every church and every church school. Loss of everyone's religious freedoms are at stake.

Dorothy Pratt
Sandy

"EMERGENCY SERVICES"



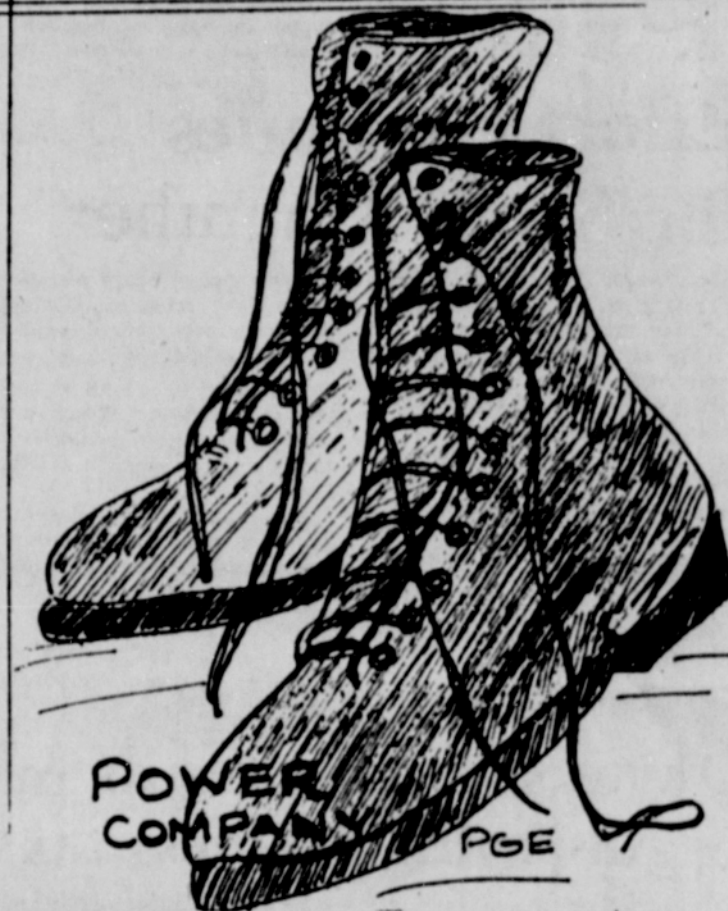
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"THEY WALK AN EXTRA MILE FOR US!"

Letter to the editor

Tax on rental units is criticized

Santa Claus has come and gone again in the town of Sandy, leaving behind him the joys of Christmas for young and old alike.

But Santa wasn't the only Christmas character to have made an appearance this holiday season. We have also been visited by the not-so-welcome Christmas Grinch, the individual we've seen in cartoon-type Christmas stories who is out to make the holiday season distasteful and unhappy.

And unlike Santa's bag full of toys and good will, the bag of the Christmas Grinch contained something that is going to be with us a lot longer than Susie's Cabbage Patch Doll or Grandpa's wool sweater. The Grinch has left us with a new so-called "fee" or license required from people who have businesses, rentals, rooms, cottages, duplexes and other multiple dwellings.

The Grinch and his hard working Social Engineers have really come up with a real winner this time. As I sat there surrounded by Christmas cards reading the letter I had received from the city of Sandy, which began, "Dear Property Owner," I began thinking why they hadn't included in their description of property, items such as dog houses, bird feeders and rabbit hutches.

As a property owner in the Sandy area I find this new tax really reaching and utterly outrageous and typical of government decision making. First of all, I don't recall receiving an invitation by mail to attend a meeting concerning the new established code. I think that property owners and their tenants as well as local businessmen should have been able to meet with the Sandy City Council and have our views noted.

Secondly, I don't really feel that you can mix people who have businesses with people who have rental property. People who sell products and items day in and day out can retrieve their fee through the goods they sell. The person who has rental property can't rely on goods to accomplish the same.

Under the Section 5.04.080(d), the Municipal Code provides that owners of rental units shall pay a fee as follows: 1 to 10 units, \$5 each; 11 to 20 units, \$10 each; 21 or more units, \$15 each; and trailer, trailer space, \$5 each space.

By the way, if you don't abide by the new code and obtain your license you are subject to penalty and fees in Municipal Court fines and/or other legal actions by the city. Ah, Democracy! Makes you feel good all over knowing that you once again had the opportunity to participate in city government.

As we all know the dead heads that we have in Salem are in no way, shape or form a legislative body, but in fact a taxing body. That kind of decision making is not only prevalent locally but nationally as well. It's then no surprise that the Social Engineers of Sandy are no different.

It seems that we, as property owners, are besieged with taxes, fees of all kinds and whatever lies ahead. We're being asked to contribute more and more and having less to say about it. You can't even get anywhere voting anymore. The opposition simply has it brought back again and again until it passes.

What can an individual do about avoiding having to pay a fee you feel is unjustified. Well, you can sell if you can find a buyer. If you sell you are simply passing the problem on. You can refuse to pay the fee and be subject to fines, penalties and be hassled to death till you succumb to the inevitable. Or you could maybe secure the services of an attorney if you can afford to be right.

I really think that there could be other ways that the city of Sandy could collect fees if they were to look further. I was thinking of some such as: placing a tollgate at either end of town and charging people a toll before entering city proper. Or how about placing a fee on toilet tissue. This is certainly something we all use from time to time. Seems fair. Maybe they could require people who are taller than the short people to be licensed. Or even better yet why not provide everyone with a device that they would carry with them at all times that monitors the amount of air you breathe. Then, on a daily basis you would simply pay so much per litre of air. After all, there is only so much air in the air at any given time. Probably someone is getting more than their share.

I realize that unfortunately it takes money to provide services which in turn provides jobs, etc.; but it seems that some of these decisions are really a bit much. Where do we as property owners and business people draw the line? When is enough going to be enough?

Once this new license fee

requirement is in motion it is obviously a matter of time and the fee will go up. What will it be next year? In five years?

I would like to end my comments with a quote a neighbor friend of mine shared with me, which was penned by Professor Alexander Tyler over 200 years ago while we were still a British colony. "A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves largesse from the public treasury, with the result that a democracy always collapses over loose fiscal policy, always followed by a dictatorship."

The average age of the world's greatest civilizations has been two hundred years. These nations have progressed through this sequence: From bondage to spiritual faith; from spiritual faith to great courage; from courage to liberty; from liberty to abundance; from abundance to complacency; from complacency to apathy; from apathy to dependence; from dependence back into bondage!

So, property owners and businessmen alike, take note. When you shop next Christmas time you might like to buy that special person on your list a can of air. There's no telling what that old Grinch will have in his bag for you and I.

Robert Lee
Brightwood

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