

## COMMUNICATIONS ACTS

### 1903 - Berlin Convention

- 27 countries meet and reach intl. agreement
  - wireless humanitarian concerns override commercial concerns
  - Marconi and USA not involved

### 1906 - Berlin Convention

- Same countries
- Agreements that ships need to be equipped with apparatus capable of receiving/transmitting SOS messages between systems

### Wireless Ship Act of 1910

- first US effort
- adopted Berlin 1906 agreements to be invited to planned Berlin 1912 Convention
- focus on maritime communication  
AGAIN. . .
  - humanitarian concern
- Specific Regulations pertaining to ocean-going steamers visiting any U.S. port:
  - all ships must be equipped with radio apparatus capable of exchanging messages up to 100 miles
  - fine: up to \$5,000
  - omission: no 24-hour watches

### Radio Act of 1912

- Inspiration: Titanic
- New Regulations:
  - now required to have 24-hour watches on ship
    - two operators required (1 day/1 night)
  - all operators using U.S. ports or shore must be licensed
    - licensing authority: Secretary of Commerce
    - licensing not discretionary

### Radio Act of 1927

- New Regulations:
  - 5-member Federal Radio Commission
    - five members
    - original mandate: clean up technical chaos on radiowaves
    - appointed by U.S. president
    - approved by U.S. Senate
  - discretionary licensing power by FRC
  - censorship toward radio prohibited
  - monopoly within radio prohibited
- Other Features:
  - term "broadcasting" first used

- language "public interest, convenience, necessity" first appears

### **Communications 1934 Act**

- Aim: congressional desire to place all regulatory action under one authority
- New Regulations:
  - FRC becomes FCC
    - from 5 members to 7
    - seven year terms
  - licensing:
    - issued only after station construction and testing
    - renewals not automatic- must demonstrate you're meeting public interest standard
    - requirements:
      - U.S. citizenship
      - good character
      - financially qualified
      - technically qualified
      - other
  - Section 315: fairness for all political candidates
  - Section 326: prohibits censorship in broadcasting
- Other Notes:
  - "public interest, convenience, and necessity" language appears 11 times

### **Telecommunications ACT of 1996**

- Features
  - incorporates much of 1934 Act
- Changes:
  - Ownership limits expanded:
  - V-chip in all TV sets manufactured after Jan. 1997
  - License terms extended from 5 to 8 years
    - competing applications eliminated unless existing owner guilty of serious violation of FCC rules
  - Communications Decency Act (Internet content regulation)
  - Networks:
    - Allows common ownership additional network if it's a new, not existing network
  - Mandates 2-year reviews by FCC