

# FCC Kills Controversial Fairness Doctrine

The Fairness Doctrine is dead, and few conservatives will shed a tear. The Federal Communications Commission on Monday official removed the controversial doctrine from the Code of Federal Regulations.

“The elimination of the obsolete Fairness Doctrine regulations will remove an unnecessary distraction. As I have said, striking this from our books ensures there can be no mistake that what has long been a dead letter remains dead,” said FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski.

The rule enabled the FCC to compel broadcasters to air opposing viewpoints on controversial issues that the government decided to be of public importance. The Fairness doctrine was first put on the books in 1949, and later eliminated in 1987. But there was a push by liberals to give new life to the old rule.

“The Fairness Doctrine is a relic of an earlier era when government officials thought they knew best what news and information the American people wanted and needed,” said House Energy & Commerce Committee Chairman Fred Upton (Mich.) and Communications Subcommittee Chairman Greg Walden (Ore.). “The rules are outdated and needlessly endanger our sacred freedoms of speech and the press. The FCC has finally done what it should have done 20 years ago: It has scrapped the Fairness Doctrine once and for all.”

Beyond the government, the NRB is also applauding the death of the Fairness Doctrine. For the last eight years, the NRB has been actively warning Congress that the Fairness Doctrine was not dead because it was still ‘on the books.’ The NRB vowed to remain vigilant.

“While the letter of the law is now dead, we want to ensure that the spirit of this particular law also remains dead,” said Dr. Frank Wright, NRB President & CEO. “There are many voices calling for increased scrutiny of broadcast programming under the guise of ‘localism,’ and we see such proposals as a Fairness Doctrine in different garb.”