

October 2, 2007

The Honorable Harry Reid
S-221 United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid:

I want to thank you and your Senate Democratic colleagues for sharing your concern over recent comments made by Rush Limbaugh on his daily radio program. First, let me say that the men and women who wear the uniform in defense of our country deserve the utmost respect and gratitude from each and every one of us whom they serve to protect. I assure you that I fully agree with your statement that "not a single one of our sons, daughters, neighbors and friends serving overseas is a phony soldier." As a grateful American citizen, I would reject anyone's contention to the contrary.

Mr. Limbaugh's comments last week have stirred a lot of emotion, and I have carefully read the transcript from the episode in question. I hope you will appreciate that I cannot speak with authority as to whom exactly Mr. Limbaugh's comments were directed, or what was his intent. Only Mr. Limbaugh can speak to those issues, which he has done.

I can say, however, that over the years Mr. Limbaugh has repeatedly praised the dedication and valor of our brave men and women in uniform. Given Mr. Limbaugh's history of support for our soldiers, it would be unfair for me to assume his statements were intended to personally indict combat soldiers simply because they didn't share his own beliefs regarding the war in Iraq. However, if Mr. Limbaugh's intention was to classify any soldier opposed to the war in Iraq as a "phony soldier," which he denies, then I, along with most Americans, would be deeply offended by such a statement.

While I do not agree with everything Mr. Limbaugh says on every topic, I do believe that he, along with every American, has the right to voice his or her opinion in the manner they choose. The First Amendment gives every American the right to voice his or her opinion, no matter how unpopular. That right is one that I am sure you agree must be cherished and protected.

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As the Chief Executive Officer of Clear Channel, I support each of our on-air talent's right to express his or herself freely, as long as they do it within the confines of the laws set forth by Congress. For this reason, I have not and will not impose my own views upon any of our on-air talent. Doing so would, quite frankly, undermine the integrity of the broadcast, undercut the trust with our listeners that they are receiving the true and honest opinions of the radio host, and more importantly fly directly in the face the right to free speech that we hold so dear.

Each and every day, Clear Channel airs a broad diversity of viewpoints from Rush Limbaugh on the right to Air America on the left of the political spectrum. It is inevitable, with so many different perspectives, that an on-air personality will challenge or even offend another segment of the public. I too am sometimes offended by words that are directed at me or a particular belief I hold. However, as a broadcaster and leader of this company, I will always defend the right of our employees and contracted talent to voice their opinions under the protections provided by the First Amendment.

I want to thank you and your colleagues for writing me regarding this matter. Again, I regret that you and others were offended by Mr. Limbaugh's statement, regardless of what its intended meaning may have been. I hope that you understand and support my position that while I certainly do not agree with all views that are voiced on our stations, I will not condemn our talent for exercising their right to voice them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark P. Mays", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark P. Mays
Chief Executive Officer