

Commoncause.org has some very worthwhile efforts under way. In fact, I've always liked that they have pushed discussion of issues. There is nothing better than open discussion about an issue to help both sides learn.

As a libertarian at heart, I actively support their published missions:

To strengthen public participation and faith in our institutions of self-government; to ensure that government and political processes serve the general interest, rather than special interests; to curb the excessive influence of money on government decisions and elections; to promote fair elections and high ethical standards for government officials; and to protect the civil rights and civil liberties of all Americans.

Not a single word there that I can't go along with.

So why has commoncause veered from the ideals of Archibald Cox, their former leader?

Archibald Cox for those who don't remember, and I paraphrase the commoncause website here, "stood up to President Nixon in his role as special prosecutor investigating the Watergate scandal. He defied President Nixon and said he would continue to demand the incriminating White House tapes, which of course led to Nixon's resignation"

Special Prosecutor Cox found strength in the millions of people who stood up and supported his efforts. Again from the commoncause website, "The American people roared their support for Cox in calls and letters to Congress and the White House. Former Senator Sam Ervin (D-NC) declared the nation's response: "In volume and intensity of denunciation, this outcry of the people was without the faintest precedent in the annals of the country.""

How amazing and wonderful, that the American people under their own initiative, without prompting, took action to support their beliefs.

How sad that today, rather than encouraging people to do the same today for issues that Commoncause supports, they have lost faith in their supporters willingness to support causes from their own initiative. Instead, they have chosen to become a large scale spammer.

They must consider their supporters untrustable drones. Why else provide form letters for them to send rather than letting the supporters provide their own perspective on issues? They must not trust their drones to take action either. Why else create an automated spamming system rather than providing emails or snail mail addresses for their supporters to use on their own?

Which leads to the reason for this post.

Last month I wrote a post saying why [I thought there could be value to tiered levels of service on the internet](#). Some people agreed. Some disagreed. The beauty was in the discussion that resulted.

Discussion, it's a beautiful thing. The exchange of ideas. It leads to better ideas.

Well the spammers at commoncause.org decided that they should spam me with the following form letter.

Saturday, January 28 2006

HDnet Mark Cuban

Dear HDnet Cuban,

I support network neutrality, and I am dismayed by comments made by your executives recently indicating they want to see dramatic changes to the way the Internet operates.

Net neutrality is the reason this democratic medium has grown exponentially, fueled innovation and altered how we communicate. For-profit interests should not be allowed to destroy the democratic culture of the web.

I strongly urge you to oppose policies that permit network operators to block, impede or interfere with any lawful Internet traffic, now or in the future.

Reading the comments show the obvious lack of thought and effort involved. Comments made by "my executives"? But wait, it gets better. On their [website, they have my picture](#), altered with devil horns :), with the following

"Take a look below (or [here](#)) at what some brazen telecom execs had to say, and then send a message telling them how you feel about the Internet."

I guess I forgot that I worked at a telecom. My goodness.

I have gotten probably 1500 or so of the above spam emails. Fortunately, it didn't take me long to set up a filter and throw them in a folder and not be bothered with them, but that doesn't change the fact that Commoncause.org has lost the direction that Archibald Cox provided. Does anyone over there really think that he would support spamming anyone? Or would he try to educate people to the issues and encourage them to speak their minds.... in their own words.