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22506 Hwy W

Barnett, MO 65011

Ph: 717-490-9311

[www.electsys.biz](http://electsys.biz/)

**WC 18-155  
Comments on Amish & Mennonite Filings**

To the ruling body of the FCC

As a member of the Amish & Mennonite Community (Mennonite specifically), I thought it useful to share some insight into the many filings you have received from this sector of your constituents.

Most of the filers do not understand that the law required to provide what they are asking for would conflict with some of the religious principles they hold. If they did, they would request the opposite ruling. I will mention several reasons for this thought which may not be exhaustive, but will at least cover the basics.

1. The Amish and Mennonite community highly values separation of church and state, known internally as the Two Kingdom Doctrine. As such, our communities favor the free market place over large government and regulation because it allows us the greatest freedoms. These freedoms are the reason we came here from Europe in the first place.
2. We understand that we have a moral obligation to pay our own bills and that there is no free lunch. In cases that a free lunch is provided, we are not in favor of receiving it because we understand that the ‘borrower is servant to the lender”. Many of the filings from our community have wrongly assumed that free conferences are funded by tax dollars. If our people understood that these services are paid for by other free market companies (CLECs etc) they would not be in favor of continued intercarrier compensation.
3. Our communities have suffered from carrier call blocking at a higher than average percentile for the following reasons.
   1. Most of our communities are rural. This translates into a high per minute intercarrier compensation rate which in turns increases the likelihood of incoming calls being blocked.
   2. Some of our communities to not permit the use of cell phones. This results in increased reliance on landline services, which in turn, increases the negative impact of call blocking.
   3. If our people understood that their suffering from call blocking is a result of arbitrage and traffic pumping, they would not be in favor of continuing the status quo.
4. Many in our community are under the impression that WC 18-155 could force conference services out of business. This is simply not true. Instead, it only means that these companies will need to start charging for the service.

There are two concerns brought up in the filings that are valid.

1. Conference services play a larger role to the Amish and Mennonite communities than to the average American because of the rejection of the internet and/or social media.
2. The Pennsylvania German/Dutch language is nurtured by the conference platforms.

Both statements above are true, but a ruling in favor of “bill and keep” will not cause a problem in this regard. Conferencing will continue to play a major role in our communities even if you rule in favor of “bill and keep”. Our people will simply start paying for them.

Conclusion: The best thing the FCC ruling body can do to make a positive contribution to the Amish and Mennonite communities is continue moving toward “bill and keep” deregulation. This will a) support our moral preferences for freedom by free market and paying our own bills b) reduce telecommunication cost in general c) address call blocking problems by removing conflicts of interest.

Best Regards,

Antony Weaver