

June 10, 1992

Debra R. Searcy
Secretary for FCC
Room 222
1919 M St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

RECEIVED

JUN 15 1992

FCC MAIL BRANCH

Dear Madam Secretary,

Please keep 1-800 numbers
free from extra-charge schemes.
Don't allow companies to "trick"
consumers into paying charges after
having placed a call to a 1-800
number. Thank you in advance
for the action you will take
in this regard.

(Mrs. Allen J. Wilshire)
Rt. 1, Box 456
Boone, NC 28607

Sincerely
Lorraine D. Wilshire

277-271

FCC MAIL SECTION

JUN 15 1 50 PM '92

June 12, 1992

REC:

Donna R. Searcy
Secretary for FCC
Room 222
1919 M St. N.W.
Washington D.C. 20554

Dear Ms. Searcy,

Last week, I ran across several editorial comments in the paper about the 800 calling number's use as a gateway for 900 calling number service selection.

I remember when the new 900 calling numbers first showed up, by hearing through the grapevine from friends to "watch it -those new 900 calling numbers cost money to call - they are not like 800 numbers!" There was no notification ahead of time that most people saw that warned them about this. Gradually, we all became aware of this difference.

Now, the hucksters have worked a new trick. They sucker you in with a seemingly free 800 call, then offer goods and services to the caller if he will punch in a few more numbers to hear about them. The numbers turn out to cost the unsuspecting caller money. Eventually, the public will catch on to this gimmick too.

If the hucksters really need this kind of a free gateway to allow you to shop for their services before buying, that's fine. Let's create a 700 call number to act as this gateway, advertising it heavily in advance as such, and force the hucksters to put in a clearly worded message at the start that "subsequent dialing will lead to money charges".

BUT DO NOT MESS UP A GOOD WORKING SYSTEM LIKE THE 800 CALL SYSTEM TO SATISFY THE "LET THE BUYER BEWARE TYPE SALESMAN"!!

Sincerely,



G. Robert Meyer
3623 Mapleway Dr.
Toledo OH 43614

Comment from: Paul Stone

211-5790

P.O. Box 27693
Salt Lake City, UT 84129

10A • MONDAY, JUNE 8, 1992 • USA TODAY tel: 801-585-3242

THE

"USA TODAY hopes to serve as a forum for better understanding and unity to help make the USA truly one nation."

—Allen H. Neuharth
Founder, Sept. 15, 1982



Peter S. Prichard
Editor

Karen Jurgensen
Editor of the
Editorial Page

Thomas Curley
President and Publisher

Today's debate is on **TOLL-FREE PHONE CALLS** and the need for regulations to prevent charges on 1-800 lines.

OUR VIEW

Even the wariest buyer should be able to take some things on faith. One of them is that calls to 900 numbers cost money, but calls to 800 numbers don't.

For 25 years, "1-800" has spelled "free." Most of the time, it still does. But a few money-hungry opportunists are changing that. Having fouled the 900-number nest, they're now setting up shop in unbesmirched 800 territory.

They're providing sex advice for \$4.95 a minute or psychic readings for as much as \$120. Or they're sending out postcards that invite "sweepstakes winners" to call a "toll-free" 800 number to identify their prizes. Once on the line, the unlucky winners have to punch in more numbers to find out what they've won — for a fee.

This mischief can and should be stopped.

Thirty-four states' attorneys general have asked the Federal Communications Commission to bar long-distance companies from supplying 800 service

to companies that wind up charging consumers for the calls.

The FCC should do as they ask.

Years of habit tell people that "800" means "no cost to you."

Yet no rule says 800 calls have to be free. Long-distance companies can't even deny 800 service to anyone until complaints come pouring in.

If 900-type services can be disguised by 800 numbers, consumers miss out on some hard-won protections, like free blocking of outgoing 900 calls. There is no free blocking of 800 numbers.

Two long-distance companies — AT&T and Sprint — are working with the FCC toward new rules to protect the integrity of 800 numbers.

New rules won't punish legitimate businesses; anyone who wants the dialer to connect them to a free 900 number

write to the FCC what you think about toll-free numbers toll free, write:

Elizabeth Searcy

Secretary for FCC

Room 222

1900 M St. N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20554

CHARLES E. SPELLMAN

PostOffice Box 163282
Austin, Texas 78716-3282

(512)474-1944

(512)463-0855

15 June 1992

Donna R. Searcy
Secretary for FCC
Room 222
1919 M St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Ms. Searcy:

Please advise the Commission of my feelings that the 1-800 numbers should remain free of any charge to the public and incorporated into the rules and regulations. I hope that the Texas Attorney General is among those who have asked the Commission to establish rules in this area. I would also suggest that these rules have effect on an emergency basis so that the public is better protected.

Yours truly,


Charles E. Spellman

1611 N. Lyon
Springfield, MO 65803
June 8, 1992



Dear Ms. Searcy:

I am appalled to learn from USA Today that greedy companies are being allowed to use 800 numbers and charging consumers for such calls. This practice should be halted at once! I get more unsolicited calls than I can handle from other sources as it is. Please give the consumer a break!

Sincerely,

Hamilton D. Wright
Hamilton D. Wright

Dear Friends: Toll-free 1-800 phone service is useful to legitimate businesses and to the consumer alike. Please ensure that these connections remain free. We do not want our children (or employees) running up unauthorized charges for sex advice or sweepstakes. It is a pity that a few cheats will go to our lengths to destroy what should be a great convenience to the rest of the community. I support the initiatives of AT&T and our state attorneys-general.

Sincerely,
WM Buscombe

MR WM BUSCOMBE
1231 ASBURY AVE
EVANSTON IL 60202

6-10-92

FCC

Subject: 800 reb. #'s

I strongly favor keeping 800 #'s free and completely out of the hands of sleazy operators!

John C. Snyder



JOHN C. SNYDER
6356 MAY DR.
HAMBURG, NY 14075

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Keep 1-800 numbers free from extra-charge schemes

OUR VIEW The FCC should enact new rules to guarantee that calls to 800 numbers are toll free.

Even the wariest buyer should be able to take some things on faith. One of them is that calls to 900 numbers cost money, but calls to 800 numbers don't.

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The FCC should do as they ask.

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Yet no rule says 800 calls have to be free. Long-distance companies can't even deny 800 service to anyone until complaints come pouring in.

If 900-type services can be disguised by 800 numbers, consumers miss out on some hard-won protections, like free blocking of outgoing 900 calls. There is no free blocking of 800 numbers.

Two long-distance companies — AT&T and Sprint — are working with the FCC toward new rules to protect the integrity of 800 numbers.

New rules won't punish legitimate businesses; anyone who wants the dialer to pay can sign up for a 900 number.

The FCC should act to keep 800 numbers free from sleazy operators.

To tell the FCC what you think about keeping 800 numbers toll free, write:

Donna R. Searcy
Secretary for FCC
Room 222
1919 M St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Keep the 800 numbers toll free!
Michael J. Searcy
ST. JOSEPH, MO 64506

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Donna R. Searcy
Secretary for FCC
Room 222
1919 M St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

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Please keep

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JUN 15 1992

FCC MAIL BRANCH

"500"
It's Free, It's

John + Doni Ludwig
40 Old Farm Rd
Hidden Hunt
Salisbury, NC 28144

P.S.: This is in response to article
in USA Today, June 8th issue.

8 June 92

Dear Mrs. Seaver,

Having had over 200⁰⁰ changed to our phone base from calls made to a 900 number by my sixteen year old son, I was so grateful I could block 900 calls from our phone. I thought we were through having to deal with the noise of pay for pen.

Then I found a poor magazine just this past week in his room that had a 800 number to call - for what I know what - plastered on the back of the magazine in very large numbers.

I don't know if that 800 number was free or I would have had a charge on our phone base if called. Isn't there any way these 900 pen numbers can be removed for good and for sure, restricted from coming to 800 numbers?

800 numbers should be free but clear of pornography. I am very angry that every hand bought protection on phone lines should be so easily.

I want to save my child's mind, not continue to give it the opportunity to be warped for a life time and possibly years of therapy to ~~repair~~ correct the damage. Please, act to keep 800 numbers free.

RE

June 8

Grand Junction Colo

June 8, '92

DONNA SEARCY
 SECY FOR FCC
 RM 222
 1919 M ST, N.W.
 WASH DC 20554

DEAR Miss:

In regards to Page 10A of the Monday June 8 issue of USA Today, I'm sure you have already read this editorial.

I can only add that if there are ever any charges on my telephone bill for calls made to "800" numbers I will not pay them.

It can surely be assumed that Steven Hammond would prosper greatly if the FCC would allow "800" numbers to go the same way that "900" numbers have gone.

Thank You.

Sincerely

Ric Hileman

RIC HILEMAN

Apt 3 540-29 Road

Grand Junction, Colo.

81501

Robert T. Watral
12634 Blue Bonnet Drive
Sun City West, AZ 85375

June 8, 1992.

DENNA R. SEARCY - Sec'y For FCC
1914 M St. N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20554

DEAR MS. SEARCY -

AS USUAL IN MY READING OF USA TODAY NEWSPAPER I TURNED TO EDITORIAL PAGE AND READ THE EDITORIAL ON "TOLL-FREE PHONE CALLS." I HOPE YOU HAVE READ BOTH PRO'S & CON'S ON THIS DEBATE.

I FOR ONE BELIEVE THAT "1-800" MEANS FREE, AND ANYTHING THAT CAUSES CHARGES TO AN "800" NUMBER IS UNACCEPTABLE. MY TELEPHONE LINES ARE BLOCKED ON OUT GOING 900 CALLS, AND I DO NOT WANT MY TELEPHONE LINES BEING ^{LINKED} TO ANY UNWANTED CHARGES AS HAD BEEN THE CASE WHEN "900" NUMBERS WERE BEING USED INDESCRIMINATELY BY SOMEONE WITHIN OUR HOUSEHOLD A FEW YEARS AGO.

THERE WILL ALWAYS BE SOME SLEAZY OPERATORS TRYING TO WORK AROUND RULES IN AN EFFORT TO MAKE A BUCK. MORE THAN LIKELY THE PUBLIC HAS CAUGHT ON TO THESE EXORBITANT "900" CHARGES AND ARE REFUSING TO USE THESE SCAMS, SO NOW THESE SAME OPERATORS ARE TRYING TO CIRCUMVENT THE RULES BY USING "1-800" NUMBERS AS A COVER UP & THEN HAVING UNSUSPECTING CALLER'S PUNCH IN ADDITIONAL NUMBERS WHICH UNKNOWINGLY ADD ON A FEE TO THE CALL. ALWAYS AN ANGLE.

I HOPE THE FCC SQUELCHES THESE ACTIONS RIGHT AWAY, AND MAKES A DECISION THAT ALL "800" NUMBERS CALLED SHOULD BE FREE OF CHARGES.

Respectfully,
Robert T. Watral



JUN 15 9 02 AM '92
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
ENFORCEMENT BRANCH
COMMON CARRIER BUREAU

RM-7990

June 8, 1992

Donna R. Searcy
Secretary for the FCC
Room 222
1919 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Donna,

Please support the 34 states' attorneys general that have asked the Federal Communications Commission to designate 1-800 numbers as truly "toll-free".

We have spent many years in our advertising and messages to the public, selling to them the concept of using the "toll-free" 1-800 number. The elderly segment of people is a fine example of how this advertising has worked. Let's not muck it up now just because some shady characters have decided to play with the public trust that has been created.

1-900 numbers are universally known as being toll calls. Let them have that distinction. And let the 1-800 numbers forever be known to the public as "toll-free", without exception.

Best Regards,

Jeanine Hudgins
Bankston-Hudgins & Associates

JH/lr



Special Events & Entertainment Production
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511 12/13

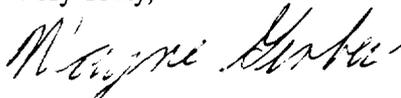
June 8, 1992

Dear Ms. Searcy:

I'm writing this letter in reference to an article in the USA Today Newspaper, June 8, 1992, regarding 800 numbers. I would like to state my support to keep it free. I dialed an 800 number free of charge on February 19, 1992, then I received a bill for \$12.60 to be paid by March 4, 1992. I notified the post office and filled out a complaint form. On April 2, 1992, I received another letter from Audio Telecom stating there would be no further billing.

Just like the others, I was very surprised and upset when I received this bill. However, I was one of the lucky ones, everything worked out okay.

Very Truly,



Wayne Gerbes

P.S. I have attached various documents relating to my experience.

511 12/13

Em 273

2533 Retrievers Ridge Rd.
Richmond, VA 23233

June 9, 1992

Donna R. Searcy
Secretary for FCC
Rm 222
1919 M. St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Ms. Searcy,

I am writing to request that the FCC keep the "800" phone numbers scheme and charge-free. I have experienced calling 800 numbers that were really calls that had charges attached. Sometimes the message wasn't clear enough to understand that you had to "hang up immediately to avoid charges." I have two children who know not to call 800 numbers, but think 800 numbers are okay.

Please keep one thing in our life free of confusion and game-playing. Make sure that all 800 numbers, no matter how long you are on the line, remain free. Thank you. Sincerely,

May Page



RM-3905

June 1992

Secretary for FCC
Donna R. Searcy

800 Phone numbers should
remain a no charge to caller.
These sudden charges are not
planned or wanted when a 1-800
number is called.

Please keep 1-800 numbers
free and no sudden charges
when they are made

Ray Spangle
PoB 2072
Ft Riley KS 66442

FCC MAIL SECTION

JUN 15 10 02 AM '92

June 8, 1992

Ms. Donna R. Searcy
Secretary for FCC
Room 222
1919 M St. .N W.
Washington, DC 20554

To Whom It May Concern:

Please implement the protection against charging a fee for dialing an 800 number. This practice has been in place for many years and should not be confused by the option of choosing to continue the phone call at your expense or hanging up to save money.

The FCC is (or should be) in the business of protecting the American consumer from the likes of these business people who prey on the elderly or adolescent with the type of deceptive practices described in the USA TODAY editorial (06/08/92).

Sincerely,



Paul Desiderio
128 Driftwood Lane
Guilford, CT 06437

6/9/92

Donna R. Searcy Sec. 17-cc

Keep 1-800 numbers
free from extra-charge
schemes.

1-800 has been a wonderful
tool and should be left
alone to continue this
fine work.

Thank you.

Chester Plonka
Chester Plonka



Plonka
11015 Salmon Dr SE
Huntsville AL 35803-1015



Wyoming Motel

Clearmont Rt. Box 11

Buffalo, WY 82834

At the intersection of

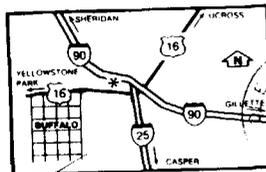
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6703

Hello DONNA

PLEASE DO WHAT YOU MAY DO TO

KEEP 1-800 #'S FREE! BEING IN THE
MATE! BUSINESS FOR 11 YEARS OUR CUSTOMERS
USE 800 #'S A LOT BECAUSE THEY ARE FREE!

CHARGING FOR 800 #'S OR TRYING PEOPLE TO USE 1-800 TO
SUCK MONEY OUT OF PEOPLE WILL REALLY CONFUSE OUR
MARKETING OF PEOPLE TO PLACE OF BUSINESS! THANK-YOU
DEL HELLER



Mary E. Co. 4560 Mainway NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505 (616) 361-7217



DONNA R. SEARCY
Room 222
1919 M St. N.W.
Washington, D.C.

20554

Doana:

Keep 1-800 -
Free!

Tjude

Dear FCC Secy.:

4/16/92.

I think the FCC definitely needs to make sure that calls to 800 numbers stay toll free... Please see to it that 800 numbers do not start charging for calls... The telecommunications industry is already confusing enough. The consumer, I believe, got the short end ever since N.F.T.

Mary Thompson
26 Lakeview Drive
Granite City IL 62040

Dear Doana,

Keep 800 numbers free and sleazy operators out. Having fouled the 900 # net the hucksters are trying to squeeze in on a free thing, it's a lure. Keep them out, surely they can find other numbers to muck up. Citizens are also tired of footing the bill. Toughen up and start squashing these crooks. Good all keep them out of 800

Gettysburg Pa.

180/8
PA

The Express-Times

SERVING PENNSYLVANIA AND NEW JERSEY SINCE 1855

Timothy M. ~~Schwartz~~ Publisher

David E. McCollum General Manager James S. Flagg Editorial Page Editor

Joan C. Stewart Executive Editor

Our VIEW

FCC needs to curb 800 phone schemes

When you dial an 800 number, you don't expect to be billed for the call. Since their advent 25 years ago, 800-numbers have been regarded as toll-free.

But some unscrupulous businesses are changing that. They're using touch-tone technology to determine who called their 800 lines and reversing the charges.

Attorneys general in 34 states, including Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and two long-distance companies have called on the Federal Communications Commission to quash this deceitful practice. It should do as they've asked — and soon, before more unsuspecting callers are billed.

Currently, there are no rules that say consumers can't be charged for calls to 800 numbers. Nor can long-distance companies deny 800 lines to any business until numerous complaints have been filed.

Last week, the FCC proposed changing its rules so that telephone companies would be prohibited from providing 800 lines to anyone who bills the dialer.

Legitimate businesses wouldn't be punished by this change. They could still sign up for 900 numbers, which people know they pay for.

But the change would hang up on sleazy operators and their 800 schemes.

✓ Consumers can be protected from 900 numbers by signing up for free call blocking. They don't have that protection when 900 numbers are disguised as 800 numbers.

The FCC is seeking public comment on the proposed changes in its pay-per-call rules. The deadline to send comments to Washington, D.C., is July 8.

✓ Consumers should add their voice to the campaign

YOU HAVE THE POWER

Here's where you can write to tell the FCC what you think about keeping 800 numbers toll-free.

■ DONNA R. SEARCY
Secretary for the FCC
Room 222
1919 M St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20554