



Millcreek Township School District

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Millcreek Education Center
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July 17, 1997

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JUL 18 1997

Mr. William Caton, Acting Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Room 222, 1919 M street NW
Washington DC 20554

FCC MAIL ROOM

Re: Joint Petition for Stay filed by Southwestern Bell Corporation, Pacific Bell and Nevada Bell, CC Docket No. 96-45

Dear Mr. Canton,

On behalf of the Millcreek Township School District, we are writing to urge the FCC to deny the Joint Petition for Stay filed in response to the FCC's Universal Service Order. We oppose the Stay because it would thwart the extensive efforts this district has already undertaken and continues to undertake to implement the order.

This district has invested a substantial commitment of time and resources to make sure that we will be able to take advantage of the Universal Service Plan. We have conducted technology assessments within the district, reviewed and updated our technology plan and are in the process of developing requests for service. All of these efforts will be substantially frustrated if the Stay is imposed. Moreover, we have applied for state technology literacy grant which is leveraged upon the federal universal service support program.

It would be regrettable if the opportunity to provide to educational institutions universal access to the national information highway were thwarted because of differing opinions over whether the outcomes are reasonable. We urge the FCC to deny the Joint Petition for Stay, and to continue on course to implement its Report and Order on Universal Service.

Respectfully,

Dr. Alan K. Lindquist
Superintendent

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DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

Mr. William Caton
Acting Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Room 222
1919 M Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: CC Docket No. 96-45, Joint Petition for a Stay Pending Judicial Review filed by Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, Pacific Bell, and Nevada Bell

Dear Mr. Caton:

On behalf of the 1500 personal and institutional members of the Pennsylvania Library Association, I wanted to convey, in the strongest possible terms, our association's deep disappointment over the action filed by Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, Pacific Bell, and Nevada Bell, and further urge that the Federal Communications Commission reject this ill-advised and counterproductive petition to stay the universal service provisions of the FCC's Report and Order of May 8, 1997.

In this instance, the sad fact is that the parties cited above chose a course of confrontation rather than cooperation. Instead of working out problems in partnership with libraries, schools, and rural health care providers, the petitioners opted for a strategy of delaying and undermining the Commission's many months of hard work. Unfortunately, in the process, the petitioners' call to maintain the status quo does, in fact, result in significant harm to libraries and the millions of citizens who rely on them each and every day.

Here are just two small examples. Through 16 libraries and one affiliate member, the Berks County Library System in eastern Pennsylvania serves 336,000 residents of that county, most of whom live in the small towns and townships surrounding Reading, Pennsylvania. One of these libraries, the Bethel Tulpehocken Public Library, has seen it's annual telephone costs jump from \$245 in 1991 to a projected \$15,305 for 1997, **an increase of more than six thousand, two hundred percent in just six years.** Another nearby library, the Robeson Community Library, experienced a similar increase in its yearly telephone costs--from \$490 in 1991 to a projected \$16,800 in 1997, **an increase of more than three thousand, four hundred percent.** It is useful to note further that these two libraries operate on budgets of \$40,278 (Bethel Tulpehocken) and \$43,550 (Robeson), and that telecommunications costs now

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Mr. William Caton
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represent more than 38 percent of their budgets, up from two percent just six years ago.

Clearly, in this rapidly changing Information Age, libraries will continue to invest in automation and connectivity to provide the efficient and comprehensive services its patrons need and deserve. And while new automation system requirements account for some portion of the staggering increases cited in Berks County, the lion's share of these costs traces back to sharply rising telephone rates.

The point is this: any way you look at it, libraries will continue to incur significant telecommunications costs to meet the needs of the public. That's why the FCC's order on universal service represents such a critical opportunity for libraries which, at long last, can see some much-needed relief in sight. Too many libraries in Pennsylvania already operate in the shadow of month-to-month financial pressure. In the real world of libraries, keeping the doors open means used book sales, raffles, auctions, and the good will of volunteers and stretched-to-the-limit librarians. And now, on top of everything else, skyrocketing telephone rates threaten to deal the knock-out punch for any number of libraries.

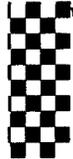
Contrary to the petitioners claim, the status quo on telecommunications represents harm aplenty for libraries. Leaving aside the disruption in planning, the uncertainty of budgeting, and the loss of precious dollars already spent that would result from granting the petitioners' stay, even a cursory look at today's library budgets reveals the rapid rise in the percentage devoted to telecommunications costs. Surely any reasonable person understands that the status quo is unacceptable for libraries, unacceptable for federal policy makers, and ought to be unacceptable as well for those who claim to be good corporate citizens.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's libraries and the citizens we serve, I urge the Commission to reject the petitioners' request for a stay. If, as claimed on page 19 of their petition, they "support as much as anyone this laudable goal", then let them withdraw this unfortunate action and move forward to work in a cooperative manner to iron out any problems and create, as Congress intended, an environment that "will help open new worlds of knowledge, learning and education to all Americans---rich and poor, rural and urban."

Sincerely,



Karl Helicher
President



Date: Wednesday, July 16, 1997 Time: 1:10:00 PM 2 Pages

To: William Caton Company:

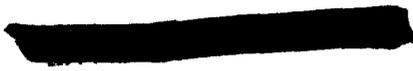
Fax: 1(202) 418-7361 Voice:

From: Michelle Pomroy Company: Berkeley Public Library

Fax: 510-644-6649 Voice: 510-649-3912

Subject: Docket No. 96-45, DA 97-1439

A hard copy of this letter will follow via U.S. Mail



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BERKELEY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Michelle Pomroy
Information Systems Specialist

Re: Docket No. 96-45, DA 97-1439

To: The Honorable Reed E. Hundt, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street NW, Room 814
Washington, D.C. 20554

CC: William Caton, Acting Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street NW, Room 222
Washington, D.C. 20554

CC: The Honorable Rachelle B. Chong, Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street NW, Room 844
Washington, D.C. 20554

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JUL 18 1997

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

I am writing to ask you to deny SBC Communications, Inc. the stay they have requested against implementing discounts to libraries. The public would benefit greatly from increased telecommunications access available through libraries. This is a very important discount program. Please don't allow these private businesses to delay it's implementation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Michelle Pomroy

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From: Starrett Kreissman
County Librarian

Subject: Discounted Telecom Service for Libraries
Docket No. 96-45, DA 97-1439

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STARRETT KREISSMAN, COUNTY LIBRARIAN

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Honorable Reed E. Hundt, Chairman
F.C.C.
1919 M Street NW, Room 814
Washington, DC 20554

Docket No. 96-45, DA 97-1439

Dear Chairman Hundt:

I was very disappointed to hear that SBC Communications, the parent company of our telecommunications system here, has challenged the "e-rate" discounted telecom service for libraries.

Our library system serves a number of rural customers, in an area with a very low education, income, and literacy rate. In spite of these drawbacks, our libraries are heavily used, with 63% of county residents in our 1500 square mile service area possessing a library card. We operate at a moderate level of service, and every year we use more electronic means of communication and information retrieval.

I have been eagerly awaiting the projected telecommunications discount as a way of doing more within our restricted budget. Savings on telecommunications costs in this area would enable this library system to buy more materials, and/or upgrade equipment, making service better for our library customers.

I sincerely hope that the F.C.C. will deny this challenge to discount telecommunication services to libraries.

Sincerely,

Starrett Kreissman
County Librarian

cc: William Caton, Acting Secretary, F.C.C.
Honorable Rachelle B. Chong, Commissioner, F.C.C.

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**CALIFORNIA
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GREGG T. ATKINS
1997 President

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RE: CC Docket No. 96 - 45, DA 97-1439

July 16, 1997

The Honorable Reed E. Hundt, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N.W., Room 814
Washington, D.C. 20554

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Dear Chairman Hundt:

The California Library Association strongly urges the Federal Communications Commission to reject the request of Southwestern Bell for a stay of the FCC's Universal Service Order, adopted May 7, 1997. The California Library Association (CLA) provides leadership for development, promotion, and improvement of library services, librarianship and the library community.

Staying implementation of the Order will result in substantial harm to libraries and schools, which have already begun to work to acquire the necessary technological infrastructure to take advantage of these discounts. It is only because of these discounts that many will be able to remain connected.

Section 254 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 clearly intended that libraries, schools and certain other entities receive access to advanced telecommunications at discounted rates. These measures are very much in the public interest. The FCC's rules were adopted after an extensive period of public comment, in which the utilities and the public had extensive opportunity for input and response.

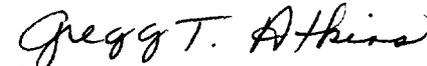
A stay would severely impair our public libraries efforts to connect and afford to remain connected to what are becoming indispensable information resources through the Internet. Government information, job opportunities, college information and other up-to-date online information resources are essential to students, job seekers and small business people who rely on public libraries for information. Libraries and schools in rural and high-cost areas of the state have additional needs for discounted access.

The California Public Utilities Commission also recognized that providing affordable access to advanced telecommunications services by libraries and schools is in the public interest by creating a similar program, the California Teleconnect Fund, in advance of the FCC's rulings.

We cannot concur, given the high profitability currently enjoyed by the Southwestern Bell companies (a profit margin double the national average rate of return) that the utilities will suffer irreparable economic injury. The mechanism instituted by the FCC to support universal service is shared fairly by providers and users. On the contrary, irreparable harm to the public interest will occur if implementation of the FCC order is stayed by delaying the public's access, through schools and libraries, to new information services.

We ask the Federal Communications Commission to implement the Universal Service Order in January 1998 and to deny Southwestern Bell, Inc.'s request for a stay.

Sincerely yours,


Gregg Atkins
President, California Library Association

cc: William A. Caton, Acting Secretary
Rachelle B. Chong, Commissioner

Our April 1996 cover letter to FCC Chairman Hundt summarized the comments:

Without effective telecommunications service rate provisions, America's libraries will be unable to continue their long tradition of cooperation, connectivity, and computerization; our libraries will be unable to continue providing public access to knowledge and information that represent a diverse range of sources and viewpoints; and ability of libraries to provide support for the increasingly vital needs of the educational community will diminish.

For the above and other reasons stated in our 1996 comments, the NCLIS Commissioners strongly supported provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 that established universal service support mechanisms assuring that libraries have access to advanced telecommunications services at discounted rates. We consequently view any interruption in implementing discounts--such as that proposed by SBC Communications, Inc.--as unnecessary and unwise.

First, libraries are moving ahead rapidly, as confirmed by our studies--with equipment, connections, training, etc.--to provide their users with electronic services and information otherwise unavailable. In other words, they are planning, budgeting and acquiring the resources for the services available by telecommunications. They also are progressing on the basis of telecommunications laws and rules enacted last year and this year. Library users therefore need and expect certain services and connections to be in place in a timely fashion. Delays affect users, not just the libraries as institutions.

Second, the process whereby the rules were considered, formulated and published allowed adequate time for all interested parties to make their positions clear. A ruling that could not satisfy everyone is no cause to re-open the decision.

Thank you for considering these views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeanne Hurley Simon". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Jeanne Hurley Simon
Chairperson