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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

October 5, 1998

William Kennard, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20554

CC Docket #98-141

Dear Chairman Kennard:

As you may recall, United Seniors Health Cooperative has taken a strong interest in telecommunications issues in recent years, sparked by concerns affecting our membership and seniors everywhere. In 1996, two of our Board members, Esther Peterson and Mary Gardiner Jones, worked with the Federal Communications Commission and the Federal Trade Commission to prepare the first-ever joint brochure produced by the two Commissions ("Facts for Consumers: Focus on Phone Leasing.")

I write now to reflect the interest of our membership and subscribers to our consumer publications (about 30,000 nationwide) in the proposed merger of SBC and Ameritech.

Cost, quality and availability of services are the issues of uppermost concern to older persons and their families. We do not foresee any negative impact in these areas caused by the merger, especially since regulation of rates and services will remain with the states. In fact, a merger should bring wider access to new products and services which will benefit the rapidly increasing number of older adults who use advanced technologies in their homes. These range from use of the Internet and E-mail for communicating with grandchildren to better delivery of health care through telemedicine.

As long as the interests of people with low incomes and special needs (such as audio-visual deficits) continue to be met, we see potential gains for older persons arising from a merger between SBC and Ameritech.

Very truly yours,

*Anne Werner*  
Anne Werner  
President and CEO

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Copies to: Commissioners Susan Ness, Michael Powell, Harold Furchgott-Roth and Gloria Tristani.