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Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

OCT 29 1998

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Mr. Kenneth A. Vining, Jr.
7405 Hickory Hill Lane, SE
Huntsville, AL 35802-2546

Dear Mr. Vining:

Thank you for your letter to Chairman William E. Kennard regarding a line item that has been added by your carrier to your telephone bill to recover its contributions to the universal service support mechanisms. Chairman Kennard has asked me to respond to your inquiry.

Long distance companies have been indirectly bearing the costs of universal service for many years, but have only recently been assessing these costs through specific line items on customers' bills. I therefore urge you to look at the bottom line on your phone bills to determine the impact on your rates. Average long distance rates have continued to decrease. Thus, the appearance of a separate line item attributed to universal service does not necessarily reflect an increase in your overall cost of phone service.

On May 7, 1997, the Commission adopted an Order to implement the Federal-State Joint Board's recommendations on universal service as required by the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (1996 Act). The Commission established universal service support mechanisms that fulfill Congress's goal, as stated in Section 254 of the 1996 Act, of ensuring that affordable, quality telecommunications services are available to all American consumers, including low income consumers and those located in high cost, rural, and insular areas. Universal service support for carriers serving high cost areas and for low income consumers has been provided for decades. In the 1996 Act, Congress expanded universal service goals to ensure the nation's classrooms and libraries receive access to the vast array of educational resources that are accessible through the telecommunications network. These support systems also will link health care providers located in rural areas to urban medical centers so that patients living in rural America will have access, through the telecommunications network, to the same advanced diagnostic and other medical services that are enjoyed in urban communities.

In the 1996 Act, Congress required all telecommunications carriers that provide interstate telecommunications services to contribute on an equitable and nondiscriminatory basis to universal service. The Commission implemented this statutory provision by requiring all such telecommunications carriers to contribute to the universal service support mechanisms. Neither Congress, nor the Commission, requires such carriers to pass this contribution on to their customers. To the contrary, carriers decide how and to what extent

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they recover their contributions. Carriers, however, may not mislead customers as to how they recover contributions and may only recover an equitable share from any particular customer.

The Commission is monitoring the universal service support mechanisms and their impact on telephone ratepayers. This issue will be carefully reviewed as the support mechanisms are administered.

Your letter has been placed in the official public record of the universal service proceeding (CC Docket No. 96-45). I appreciate your interest and views on these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa S. Gelb", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lisa S. Gelb
Chief
Accounting Policy Division
Common Carrier Bureau

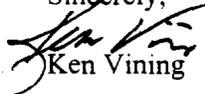
The Honorable William Kennard
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20554

August 3, 1998

Dear Mr. Kennard,

Below is a copy of the letter that I am sending to my elected representatives to protest the FCC's attempt to levy taxes and collect revenue in violation of our Constitution.

Sincerely,


Ken Vining

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The Honorable Jeff Sessions
United States Senate
495 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
United States Senate
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert E. Cramer
403 Franklin Street
Huntsville, AL 35801

RE: FCC Universal Connectivity Charge

Dear Senator/Mr. :

I am opposed to the FCC levying a tax and collecting revenues in the form of the Universal Connectivity Charge on long distance calls. If you and the other elected representatives of our country did not vote on this tax, the FCC is violating the constitution, taxing me without my vote, committing a violation of my constitutional liberties by taxation without representation. I resent that Mr. Gore or other members of the most corrupt administration in history would direct the FCC to levy this tax in direct violation of the constitution.

I am appalled at the efforts of this corrupt administration to redistribute the wealth of the citizens of this country with it's continued welfare for votes programs. As my elected representative I expect you to call this administration to task for these violations of our constitution.

I do not support federally funded internet access programs for state schools. This only opens the door for the federal government to regulate state education programs and further impinge upon the states rights just as Mr. Clinton has attempted demonstrated with the executive order 13083.

Thank you for your time, I would appreciate your support to repeal this tax and demand a refund of all monies that the FCC has illegally collected to date.

Your Constituent,
Ken Vining