September 16, 2004

Chairman Michael Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

RE: WC Docket No. 03-133

Dear Chairman Powell:

Hispanic and other minority communities rely upon low-cost telecommunications services to accomplish many every day tasks, from looking for a job or affordable housing to staying in touch with family and friends. But pending before the FCC is a proposal that would introduce new charges and fees upon services upon which we depend, immediately harming millions of Hispanic and other consumers nationwide.

I understand that the FCC is considering applying "in-state" access charges and other fees on certain prepaid calling card services. Many Hispanics, particularly those on fixed incomes or those establishing the credit history, bank accounts and other means necessary to subscribe to local telephone service, rely upon these prepaid calling cards to stay connected at set affordable rates. Students, immigrants, senior citizens, and others face similar challenges.

As a result, prepaid calling cards are the **only** option available – without them, they could, quite literally, be out of choices for staying connected. Raising the price of prepaid services will directly harm those that can least afford price increases.

Imposing in-state charges would amount to a substantial increase in the cost of prepaid calls, destroying the utility of calling cards to disadvantaged consumers. Allowing the large, local telephone companies to collect such charges, even when they do not sell the calling card to a customer, would drive up prices and would certainly make these services substantially less affordable. Please look out for consumers and refuse to impose new access charges and fees on prepaid calling card services.

Sincerely,

Cecilia Jones

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy
Commissioner Kevin Martin
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein

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Sincerely,

Tania Sandriayka

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps
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Sincerely, Eduardo Montemayor

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Sincerely,

Elise Hammond

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy
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Sincerely,

Connie Ruiz

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy
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Sincerely,

Gabriela Figueroa

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy
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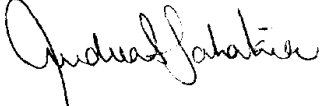

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Doreen Macias

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Melissa Hamilton

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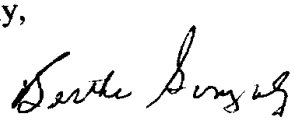

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Sincerely,

Orlando E. Garcia

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy
Commissioner Kevin Martin
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein

September 16, 2004

Chairman Michael Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

RE: WC Docket No. 03-133

Dear Chairman Powell:

Hispanic and other minority communities rely upon low-cost telecommunications services to accomplish many every day tasks, from looking for a job or affordable housing to staying in touch with family and friends. But pending before the FCC is a proposal that would introduce new charges and fees upon services upon which we depend, immediately harming millions of Hispanic and other consumers nationwide.

I understand that the FCC is considering applying "in-state" access charges and other fees on certain prepaid calling card services. Many Hispanics, particularly those on fixed incomes or those establishing the credit history, bank accounts and other means necessary to subscribe to local telephone service, rely upon these prepaid calling cards to stay connected at set affordable rates. Students, immigrants, senior citizens, and others face similar challenges.

As a result, prepaid calling cards are the **only** option available – without them, they could, quite literally, be out of choices for staying connected. Raising the price of prepaid services will directly harm those that can least afford price increases.

Imposing in-state charges would amount to a substantial increase in the cost of prepaid calls, destroying the utility of calling cards to disadvantaged consumers. Allowing the large, local telephone companies to collect such charges, even when they do not sell the calling card to a customer, would drive up prices and would certainly make these services substantially less affordable. Please look out for consumers and refuse to impose new access charges and fees on prepaid calling card services.

Sincerely,

Melissa Mazza

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy
Commissioner Kevin Martin
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein

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Sincerely,

Angel Zaragoza

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy
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Minorities, lower-income families, senior citizens, immigrants, college students and military families rely upon calling card services for a variety of needs. Many of these consumers do not have the credit history, bank accounts, or the means to pay a large deposit for local telephone service. For these consumers, a prepaid card may be the only option they have to stay connected – to make phone calls to look for a job, for affordable housing, make a doctor's appointment, or stay in touch with family and friends.

These cards offer convenience and predictable cost, as there are no hidden fees or charges. In economically disadvantaged areas, consumers literally risk being disconnected if the prices of these cards increase. Prepaid calling cards are indispensable for these and other consumer groups because they are an affordable alternative to regular and wireless telephone services.

But such price hikes are precisely what the FCC will do if it inflicts new "in-state" access charges and other fees on pre-paid cards. The fees would funnel directly to large local telephone companies while the burden would fall squarely upon those consumers that can least afford to bear it.

Adding access charges to be paid to local telephone companies will substantially increase the per minute charges on pre-paid calls, jeopardizing the benefits Hispanic and other communities gain from these services. Please stop any effort to raise rates on American consumers and decide that these services are not subject to the exorbitant new access charges and other fees.

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Sincerely,

Raul A. Rodriguez

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Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy
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