

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed in a hand-drawn oval. The signature appears to read "Jonathan Adelstein".

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

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445 12th Street, S.W.
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NOV 16 2004

Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

RE: WC Docket No. 03-133

Chairman Powell:

The FCC should **not** impose new access charges and fees upon prepaid calling cards. If you move to increase the cost of these cards, you will simply drive up the cost for minority or disadvantaged individuals to stay in touch in their communities.

The African-American community is particularly sensitive to any price increase for prepaid calling cards; approximately 70% of African American households have used them. Indeed, half of U.S. households with income below \$20,000 have used prepaid cards. Pre-paid cards are so prevalent in part because they save consumers money.

With other goods like gas and milk rising these days, we should not now be faced with rising telephone costs as well. In particular, many low-income households who are on fixed incomes depend upon prepaid service because they cannot meet the credit rating or hefty deposit requirements that local phone companies insist upon before getting a phone. With prepaid cards, consumers can make calls from payphones or the telephones of family members and neighbors. They can use these cards to stay "connected" as they look for jobs, hunt for housing, or schedule many of the other daily appointments that we all have.

I simply find it unimaginable that the FCC would impose new charges and fees on these cards. Some of the nation's largest telephone companies would be the largest recipients of such charges. **The FCC should stand up for consumers and make sure that these charges will not apply to prepaid calling cards.**

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Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy
Commissioner Kevin Martin
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein



THE BODEGA ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES, INC.

513 West 179 st. New York, N.Y. 10033

July 8, 2004
Chairman Michael K. Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

RE: Docket No. 03-133

Dear Chairman Powell:

On behalf of the Bodega Association of the United States, I urge the Commission not to add new access charges and fees to pre-paid calling cards.

Pre-paid calling cards have served as a vital lifeline among members of the Latino and African-American communities, not just in New York City but also in communities nationwide, where over 40% of Latinos and over two-thirds of African Americans have used pre-paid cards. No one knows this better than *bodega* and convenience store owners, where approximately 20% of the nation's calling card users purchase their cards.

These cards are becoming more widespread because they are a low cost and convenient way to make telephone calls. As pre-paid calling cards become more popular, *bodega* owners see an increase in sales at the same time that consumers are saving money. On the other hand, adding access charges and other fees would lead to less demand for calling cards, fewer sales for *bodegas* and less communication amongst friends and family, especially among those for whom the phone is the only connection.

This last point should not be minimized. *Bodega* owners are often the hubs of activity in many minority communities. It is evident that for many people, particularly those with low incomes, pre-paid calling cards have become a crucial avenue for staying in touch with family, contacting employers, making doctor's appointments, and staying connected in ways that we often take for granted. The impact of a higher costs for pre-paid calling costs would be severe on those who rely so heavily on them.

Bodega owners have already faced the effects of sticker shock in 2004 with the increase in dairy prices and other consumer goods. The last thing our members need is for another popular item to become prohibitively priced – it's bad for sales and bad for consumers. I therefore urge the Commission to keep pre-paid calling cards affordable.

Sincerely,

Jose Fernandez
President
Bodega Association of the United States

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Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

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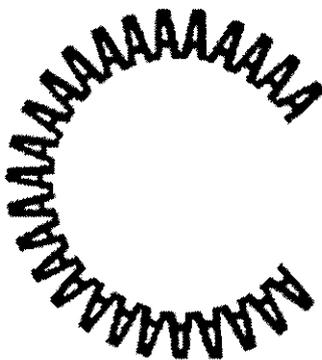
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NOV 16 2004

Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

Tel: 212 928-0252 / 1800-481-3585 Fax: 212 928-0253

Email: aeobae@aol.com / www.bodegassociation.org



Action Alliance of Senior Citizens of Greater Philadelphia

1201 Chestnut Street, 5th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107-4123
(215) 557-0751 (215) 557-0754 Fax
www.actionseniors.org
E-Mail: PhillySeniors@aol.com

July 27, 2004

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

Re: WC Docket No. 03-133

Dear Chairman Powell:

The Action Alliance of Senior Citizens of Greater Philadelphia (AASC) is a non-profit coalition of over 320 senior clubs and organizations that represent over 120,000 senior citizens in the Philadelphia metropolitan area and is active in ensuring that our members maintain affordable access to utility services, health care, transportation and other services. As a result, AASC strongly urges the FCC not to impose new, hidden "in-state" access charges upon the pre-paid calling card services that millions of senior citizens utilize today.

Senior citizens, particularly those on fixed incomes, require affordable and reliable means of keeping in touch with their families, friends and communities. In addition, pre-paid cards are simple: you pay a flat fee and, based on the per minute rate, know for exactly how many minutes you make calls. Pre-paid calling cards allow seniors on fixed incomes to budget and plan their use of long-distance calls and avoid telephone bill "sticker shock." For these reasons, senior citizens are among the fastest-growing consumers of pre-paid calling cards.

I understand that the FCC is considering imposing new access charges on pre-paid calling card services, and that the fees would be collected by local phone monopolies like Verizon here in Philadelphia. While the corporate giant rakes in additional profit with no additional cost to them, the higher prices could be devastating to seniors, who will either have to increase their monthly outlays for phone cards or substantially trim down their calls to loved ones, doctors, and the like.



PO Box 10882 | Chicago, IL 60610-0882 | email info@ilcct.org
phone 312.573.5432 | fax 312.896.5618 | toll-free 877.640.4228

Chairman Michael Powell
Commissioners Abernathy, Adelstein, Copps and Martin
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., SW
Washington, DC 20554

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AUG 12 2004

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NOV 16 2004

Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

Re: WC Docket No. 03-133

Dear Chairman Powell and Commissioners:

I am writing to you on behalf of the more than 4,500 members of the Illinois Coalition for Competitive Telecommunications (ICCT) to express our strong opposition to any policy that would impose access charges or fees to enhanced pre-paid calling cards.

Our coalition is comprised of thousands of residential consumers and small businesses, as well as smaller, local telecommunications companies that strive to create and sustain a more competitive telecommunications industry to ensure Illinois consumers have access to affordable telecommunications services.

Roughly half of all lower-income households, earning less than \$20,000 annually, have used enhanced pre-paid calling cards. Further, enhanced pre-paid calling cards have provided an affordable means for students and military personnel to stay in touch with their families and loved ones. Obviously, any increase in the costs of these cards would result in an unfair financial burden on those who can least afford to foot the bill.

Because enhanced pre-paid calling card consumers interact with stored advertising messages that exist on information platforms, and are unrelated to the local phone network, that service is classified as an "enhanced service" - currently exempt from access charges under the FCC's enhanced service provider (ESP) exemption.

The Bell monopolies are aggressively seeking new gimmicks to collect additional fees, at the expense of American consumers. They want to impose exorbitant "in-state" charges on these calling cards - up to 20 times more than the current interstate access charges consumers currently pay. These hefty in-state fees have forced families to pay more to call someone 75 miles away than they do to call someone across the country.

It's time to derail the phone monopoly gravy train in Washington, D.C. and time to start looking out for the public interest, especially those living on lower and fixed incomes; the student population; and, last but not least, our military personnel and their loved ones who depend on enhanced pre-paid calling cards for their telecommunications needs.

Sincerely,

Melia Carter, Executive Director
Illinois Coalition for Competitive Telecommunications



Reminder **PPI Friday Forum**

Do Budget Deficits Matter?

A Capital Markets Perspective

Featuring:

Dr. Robert Atkinson, Vice President, Progressive Policy Institute, and Director of PPI's Technology and New Economy Project

Richard Bernstein, Chief Investment Strategist & Chief Quantitative Strategist, Merrill Lynch

Dr. Peter Hooper, Chief U.S. Economist, Deutsche Bank

Moderated by **Vincent Catalano**, President, Capital Markets Advisory Group, and former president of the New York Society of Security Analysts

Because of the slowdown in economic growth, large permanent tax breaks, and rapid spending increases, the surpluses of the 1990s have turned into the largest budget deficits in American history. Moreover, these deficits are not likely to be temporary, as the Congressional Budget Office estimates that they will total more than \$4 trillion during the next 10 years, never drop below \$374 billion, and rise to a new record of \$494 billion this year.

Some supply side economists and other conservatives argue that deficits do not matter, that we can simply grow our way out of debt. Others argue that large and sustained federal budget deficits do matter and not only hamper growth, but will place an unfair burden on the next generation.

This panel, including Peter Hooper, a distinguished Wall Street economist, and Richard Bernstein, a leading investment strategist, will examine the effects of budget deficits and growing national debt on the economy, trade, and capital markets.

Friday, July 16, 2004

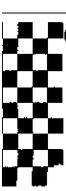
9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Progressive Policy Institute

600 Pennsylvania Ave., SE, Suite 400

Breakfast will be served.

RSVP: (202) 547-0001 or PPIEvents@dlcppi.org



Just the FAX

DATE: July 14, 2004

FROM: Melia Carter

COMPANY: ICCT

PHONE NUMBER: ()

ATTENTION: Commissioner Adelstein

COMPANY: FCC

FAX NUMBER TO CALL: (202) 418-2377

NUMBERS OF PAGES: 2 (including cover)

Notes:

July 23, 2004

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Federal Communications Commission
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Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing to add my voice to the growing number of groups and individuals **opposed** to efforts by the local Bell telephone companies to circumvent current rules on calls placed with a pre-paid calling card. If they succeed, it will result in higher rates – in many cases, dramatically higher rates – for consumers who place the calls. As you approach your work on this docket, I implore you to keep the needs of consumers in mind rather than the pleadings of the four Bell companies.

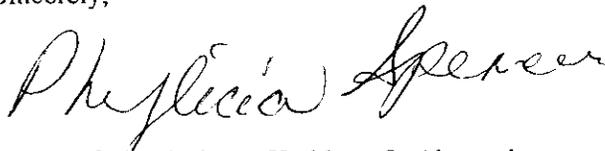
The Bell companies want to target those calls in which a caller uses a pre-paid calling card and dials a toll-free number, along with his or her PIN. The caller, who may be in Virginia, for example, is connected to a “platform” in another state -- let’s say in Nebraska. From this “platform,” he or she hears a message about a company, non-profit or person. The caller then dials the telephone number of someone in Virginia. Current rules, as well as common sense, state that this represents two calls, one from Virginia to Nebraska and one from Nebraska to Virginia. Both calls are subject to interstate access charges because there is a call to Nebraska and then a separate call to Virginia.

But the Bell companies want to treat this as a single in-state call so they can levy exorbitant in-state access charges. Such fees have no relationship whatsoever to the Bell companies’ actual costs, which are only a fraction of what they want to charge consumers.

Prices are already rising for gas, milk and other products. Consumers don’t need higher prices for phone calls too, especially when these higher rates represent a blatant giveaway to four large corporations.

I am aware that the long distance companies and others that sell pre-paid calling cards have weighed in with the FCC in an effort to protect their customers’ interests in this manner. It is now time for the FCC to weigh in on the side of consumers and show the Bell companies the door on this issue.

Sincerely,



ccs: Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abernathy
Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Commissioner Kevin J. Martin
Commissioner Jonathan S. Adelstein

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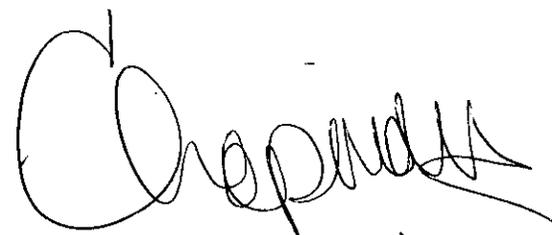
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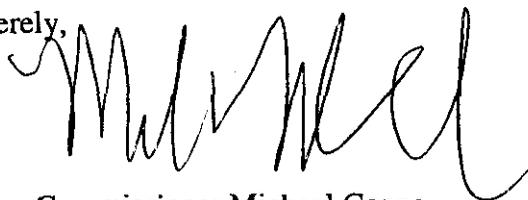
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Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing to ask that the FCC not impose new hidden charges and fees on prepaid calling card services.

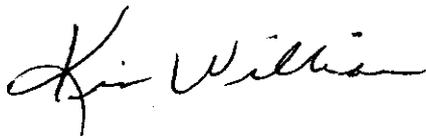
Minorities, lower-income families, senior citizens, immigrants, college students and military families rely upon calling card services for a variety of needs. Many of these consumers do not have the credit, bank accounts, or surplus cash to pay a large deposit for local telephone service. For these consumers, 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 costs.

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 and fees will substantially increase the cost of providing pre-paid cards at affordable prices, jeopardizing the savings provided by these cards.

Please stop any effort to raise the costs of pre-paid calling card consumers by deciding that these services are not subject to exorbitant new access charges and other fees.

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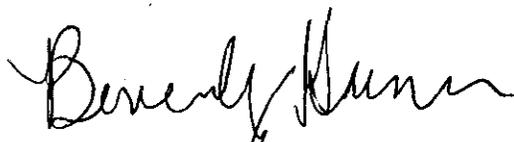
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lucia S. Harper". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and "H".

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy
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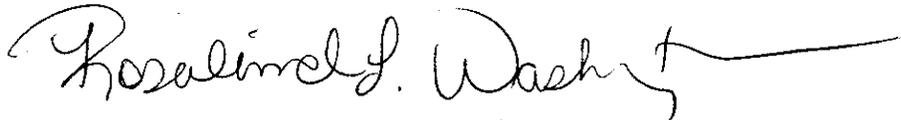
Minorities, lower-income families, senior citizens, immigrants, college students and military families rely upon calling card services for a variety of needs. Many of these consumers do not have the credit, bank accounts, or surplus cash to pay a large deposit for local telephone service. For these consumers, 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 costs.

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 and fees will substantially increase the cost of providing pre-paid cards at affordable prices, jeopardizing the savings provided by these cards.

Please stop any effort to raise the costs of pre-paid calling card consumers by deciding that these services are not subject to exorbitant new access charges and other fees.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Rosalind J. Wash", followed by a long horizontal flourish line extending to the right.

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

July 23, 2004

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

RE: WC Docket No. 03-133

Dear Chairman Powell:

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Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy
Commissioner Kevin Martin
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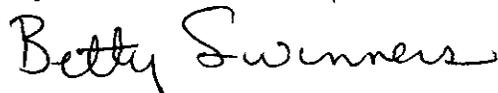
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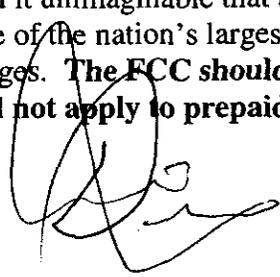
The FCC should **not** impose new access charges and fees upon prepaid calling cards. If you move to increase the cost of these cards, you will simply drive up the cost for minority or disadvantaged individuals to stay in touch in their communities.

The African-American community is particularly sensitive to any price increase for prepaid calling cards; approximately 70% of African American households have used them. Indeed, half of U.S. households with income below \$20,000 have used prepaid cards. Pre-paid cards are so prevalent in part because they save consumers money.

With other goods like gas and milk rising these days, we should not now be faced with rising telephone costs as well. In particular, many low-income households who are on fixed incomes depend upon prepaid service because they cannot meet the credit rating or hefty deposit requirements that local phone companies insist upon before getting a phone. With prepaid cards, consumers can make calls from payphones or the telephones of family members and neighbors. They can use these cards to stay "connected" as they look for jobs, hunt for housing, or schedule many of the other daily appointments that we all have.

I simply find it unimaginable that the FCC would impose new charges and fees on these cards. Some of the nation's largest telephone companies would be the largest recipients of such charges. **The FCC should stand up for consumers and make sure that these charges will not apply to prepaid calling cards.**

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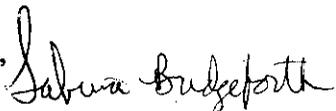
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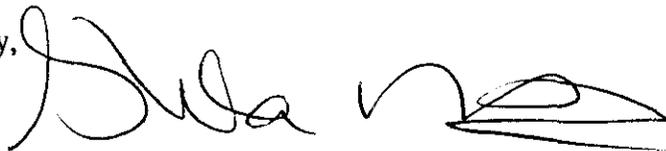
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