Dear FCC,
Consumers need remedies to protect them from broken promises of service providers and the damage caused as a result. As I understand it, AT&T wants the FCC to remove some of those remedies.

Here’s a personal example of why consumer protection should be increased, not reduced, and why when promises are broken, consumers should be allowed to terminate service contracts with no penalty while keeping their phone number, or their email ID in the case of broadband.

EXAMPLE - Months after signing a service contract and shifting all long distance calls onto my pool of cellular minutes, signal strength in my neighborhood degraded dramatically. I complained to my carrier and told them that the increased number of dropped calls was hurting my home-based business.

After several more complaints, I noticed a network engineer parked in front of my house testing signal strength, so I went out to talk to him. He confirmed my belief that two things contributed to my problem:
(1) Tower antennas serving the neighborhood were recently reconfigured to support nearby new business development, and
(2) New services like Internet access, photo sharing, and music downloads were consuming more bandwidth and in irregular patterns, sometimes leaving less capacity for voice calls, which was more noticeable when signal strength was low.

The carrier made these changes for its benefit. They were unable to restore consistently strong signal strength at my house; and even though they refused to provide a local device to amplify signal strength, I was told I could not cancel without paying an early termination "penalty." As a result, we still have the same cellular service in our new home, but with even worse reception. But we now subscribe to VoIP as the only feasible option for home phone service since my wife got tired of going outside in her pajamas to stand on the car top with the phone held high in speaker-phone mode so her head wouldn't block the signal.

It’s situations like this that should warrant contract termination while forcing the network operators to honor local number portability commitments, and it's why I support even stronger consumer protection when promises are

broken.

PUBLIC AWARENESS & INVOLVEMENT – How do general consumers hear about industry petitions to the FCC? I just stumbled upon AT&T's FCC request while doing research on another project and know there has to be a better way to seek public comment. Industry is far more aware of pending rulings than consumers, because they hire attorneys and policy analysts to follow such things, and because they are the likely ones requesting the rulings in the first place. The fact that Public Notices and comments are posted on the FCC web site or in the Federal Register does NOT mean consumers know anything about them, their existence, or their significance. This is made worse by deadlines for comments, the legalese of language that makes them difficult for most people to understand, and convoluted procedures for submitting comments. These obstacles actually discourage public comment, and I worry that the elderly and people using English as a second language have no voice at all. They are the ones needing consumer protection the most.

Regards,

Wayne Caswell
Founder & Chief Visionary
CAZITech Consulting

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<ADDRESS1> CAZITech Consulting
<ADDRESS2> 2613
Salerno

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