

Today in the St. Petersburg Times, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. Chairman Sheila Bair said in a statement "With more Americans suffering through unemployment or cuts in their paychecks, we believe it is crucial to offer a helping hand to avoid unnecessary and costly foreclosures. This is simply good business since foreclosures rarely benefit lenders and would cost the FDIC more money, not less."

The chairwoman and the FDIC obviously "get it". Many homeowners are struggling to pay their mortgages and all bills. That condition continues to worsen as most of the foreclosures NOW are due to the loss of employment and not the sub-prime lending rates. Homeowners need the ability to reduce discretionary spending as much as possible in order to pay for just the necessities --- food and housing. The FDIC understands this point.

Unfortunately, it seems the FCC does NOT "get it". Apparently, from their continued lack of action, the FCC believes it is perfectly fine for cable TV - internet providers to continue to expect struggling families to pay for these non-essentials as part of a bulk billing through an HOA agreement. The result is more struggles for families and for HOAs that MUST pay providers for every property in the development whether that property owner is paying his HOA dues or not. More and more HOAs are facing insolvency paying cable TV -- internet providers tens of thousands of dollars every month for EMPTY HOUSES and delinquent homeowners who may never pay the HOA dues until the house is sold.

Just as the FDIC is pressing lenders to give the unemployed more time before foreclosing, the FCC needs to press these greedy providers to give HOAs a break. Instead of paying for every property in the development, allow the HOA to only pay for those dues-paying properties and make the providers collect on the "bad debts" themselves. These companies have their own collection and legal departments to handle "bad debts" more effectively than HOAs can. The legal fees simply add to the HOAs' fiscal problems. Besides, the providers have the big stick -- they can deny service to non-paying homeowners. And the rationale, that because of the bulk situation, it is difficult to turn off service to an individual

household does not make sense in light of the fact that premium services can be added to individual accounts in a snap.

It is PAST TIME that the FCC either rule to ban bulk contracts for cable TV and/or internet services or at least make a temporary ruling to help homeowners and HOAs avoid more foreclosures and bankruptcies paying for these non-essentials can cause.