



THE FLORIDA SENATE

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

COMMITTEES:

Rules - Subcommittee on Ethics and Elections,
Chair
Budget - Subcommittee on General Government
Appropriations
Budget - Subcommittee on Transportation, Tourism,
and Economic Development Appropriations
Communications, Energy, and Public Utilities
Health Regulation
Reapportionment
Regulated Industries

SENATOR MIGUEL DIAZ de la PORTILLA
36th District

February 24, 2011

Chairman Julius Genachowski
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: **Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service Lifeline and Link Up**
CC Docket No. 96-45; WC Docket 03-109

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

As you know, the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service Lifeline and Link Up recently provided its recommendations to the FCC. I applaud the Joint Board's efforts to address the issues concerning Lifeline and Link Up. Lifeline service is vital to the survival of low-income families. It allows low income- families to stay connected to their relatives and potential employers. Most importantly, it allows low-income families to contact police, fire and rescue services in times of crisis.

I agree with the Board's recommendation that the Commission should look for ways to adopt uniformity regarding verification procedures and sampling criteria, that would apply to all Eligible Telecommunications Carriers (ETCs), in order to minimize waste, fraud and abuse. However, one area of concern is the discussion of capping low-income support. Historically, low-income support of the fund has had a very low penetration rate. It makes little sense to consider adding mandatory (even minimal) monthly subscriber fees for Lifeline users: this would present an undue administrative burden on both carriers and consumers. The best approach to curtailing fraud and abuse is the establishment of an eligibility database.

In this context, we must consider that low-income support is cyclical. In times of economic strife, such as the one we are currently facing, it is logical for this area of support to increase. When the economy improves, families are working and meeting their economic needs, and support for the area will decrease.

REPLY TO:

- 1481 NW 22nd Street, Miami, Florida 33142-7741 (305) 643-7200
- 312 Senate Office Building, 404 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100 (850) 487-5109

Senate's Website: www.flsenate.gov

MIKE HARIDOPOLOS
President of the Senate

MICHAEL S. "MIKE" BENNETT
President Pro Tempore

February 24, 2011

Page 2

I urge the Commission to consider the recommendations outlined in the report. However, the Commission should not adopt measures or practices that hinder the Lifeline subscriber, such as capping support, or adopting policies that limit competition in a market that has been largely ignored for decades.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Miguel Diaz de la Portilla" with "DA #36" written below it.

Miguel Diaz de la Portilla
State Senator, District 36