

April 19, 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; WC Docket 11-42

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

Thank you for the good work that you and the other members of the Commission are doing to modernize the Lifeline Assurance Program. Your efforts to make the program more efficient are to be commended.

I do hope, however, that you will remember that the Lifeline program provides a critical service to those who live day to day below the line of poverty. This program has helped over 150,000 Virginians by providing discount phone access. These struggling citizens may be using this program to assist in providing phone access while unemployed and looking for a job, or keeping a communication link between senior citizens and their doctors or emergency care.

Thus, there are a couple of proposed changes that would have immediate negative consequences. This includes any attempt to impose a monthly fee/enrollment fee, eliminate "self-certification" or cap support for the low income part of the program. These proposals present either barriers to program entry or a big setback to the essence of the program.

Much of the increase in the program's participation and success has been due to our tough economic times and the resulting high unemployment rates. As you continue to review these proposals, I hope you will consider keeping the Lifeline Program available, accessible and free to the individuals who need it the most.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Caren Fisher-Born".

CC:
Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Commissioner Robert McDowell

Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Meredith Attwell Baker