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MINNESOTA

COMMITTEES:  
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COMMERCE, SCIENCE,  
AND TRANSPORTATION  
JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE  
JUDICIARY

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 19, 2012

0510

Federal Communications Commission  
445 Twelfth Street S.W.  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Putting an end to unauthorized charges or "cramming" practices on consumer bills.

Dear Chairman Genachowski, Commissioner McDowell, and Commissioner Clyburn:

I am writing to submit comments for the record on the Report, Order, and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking being considered at the Open Commission Meeting on April 27, 2012, regarding billing for unauthorized charges on wireline telephone bills, also referred to as "cramming." As a strong advocate of consumer protections, I support the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) attention to this important issue. As you examine cramming practices, I request the Commission continue to investigate and address the abuse of third-party billing on all phone bills, including wireless bills.

The deceptive practice involving third-party billing on consumer phone bills is a problem that continues to significantly hurt consumer pocketbooks. Both the FCC and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) receive thousands of cramming complaints each year, indicating that consumers continue to be impacted by these unauthorized charges.

I have recently written to major national phone companies requesting they put an end to cramming practices. Since then, AT&T, Verizon, and CenturyLink have announced steps to end or limit third party billing for landline phones. While the industry is recognizing and addressing the cramming problem, I encourage the FCC to take additional steps in this order to protect wireline consumers.

As I wrote in my letter to the FCC on March 30, 2012, I also remain concerned about the potential for increased cramming on wireless devices. The FCC already receives a significant number of complaints from wireless consumers about billing-related cramming. In fact, the FCC has found that 16 percent of cramming complaints between 2008 and 2010 were from wireless consumers. With more and more households cutting the chord on their landline phones, the FCC should take all necessary steps to prevent crammers from finding new opportunities with consumer's wireless bills.

In short, I urge the FCC to address the predatory cramming practices impacting both wireless and wireline consumers. I thank the Commission for the consideration of my comments, and look forward to working with the FCC on this issue in the future.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator