## BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of

UNDOCKETED

Proposed amendment to Rule 25-4, F.A.C., Customer Billing for Local Exchange Telecommunications Companies : (cramming and truth in billing.) :



PROCEEDINGS: RULE DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

Fort Lauderdale, Florida

BEFORE:

CHAIRMAN JOE GARCIA

COMMISSIONER E. LEON JACOBS. JR.

DATE:

Thursday, February 4, 1999

TIME:

Commenced at 10:25 a.m. Concluded at 11:35 a.m.

PLACE:

Broward County Government Center

County Commission Chambers, Room 422

115 South Andrews Avenue Fort Lauderdale, Florida

REPORTED BY:

JOHN J. BLUE, RPR, CSR,

Notary Public, State of Florida

DOCUMENT NUMBER DATE

### **APPEARANCES:**

Office of Public Counsel:

Charles Beck, ESQ. Earl Poucher, ESQ.

Commission Staff:

Dick Durbin Carmen Pena

Division of Appeals:

Diana Caldwell

Division of Communications:

Ann Shelfer Rick Moses

Division of Records and Reporting:

Sandy Moses

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# PROCEEDINGS 1 (Hearing convened at 10:25 a.m.) 2 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: We will call this proceeding to 3 order. I want to first say that the Commission is going to 5 be providing an interpreter if someone needs it. 6 Let me introduce some of the people here for you. 7 My name is Joe Garcia. And seated to my right is 8 Commissioner Jacobs. We will be sitting through this to 9 hear from you. 10 11 We're going to have everyone here at the table introduce themselves; and we'll start with Mr. Durbin. 12 MR. DURBIN: My name is Dick Durbin. I'm with the 13 14 Florida Public Service Commission, Division of Consumer 15 Affairs. 16 MS. PENA: My name is Carmencita Pena. I work for 17 the Division of Consumer Affairs. 18 MR. BECK: My name is Charlie Beck. I'm with the 19 Office of Public Counsel. 20 With me also is Earl Poucher (phonetic), who is 21 sitting in the back. Our office represents the citizens 22 of Florida before the Public Service Commission. 23 MS. SHELFER: My name is Ann Shelfer. I'm on the 24 Public Service Commission in the Division of 25 Communications.

I'm with MS. CALDWELL: My name is Diana Caldwell. 1 the Division of Appeals. 2 MR. MOSES: My name is Rick Moses. I'm with the 3 Division of Communications. MS. MOSES: My name is Sandy Moses. I'm with the 5 Division of Records and Reporting. 6 7 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: At the back of the room, when you 8 came in, you probably ran into Mr. Kevin Bloom who is with 9 our Media Affairs Office, I believe is the term for it. 10 We're conducting this workshop, as you all know, on 11 the issue of slamming and cramming, is the direct issue. We're going to have Mr. Moses read to you the issues that 12 13 are involved in that. 14 But let me also let you know that there are people 15 in the audience, which if you've got a particular question 16 you may be able to find a representative from the 17 particular company here. 18 And let me ask the companies to stand up and 19 identify yourselves. We will start with AT&T there in the 20 back. 21 MS. MERRITT: Rhonda Merritt, with AT&T. 22 MR. BENINATE: I'm Vic Beninate with BellSouth; and with me is Catherine McKenzie of BellSouth. Thank you. 23 24 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: And we've got Mr. Earl Poucher in 25 the back of the room, which is with the Office of Public

Counsel.

If you have a problem and you don't want it discussed --

Is there any other company here?

MS. SPARKS: Karyl Sparks of Federal Transtel.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: So if you have any questions of those companies in particular, you've got them here and you can ask them. Mr. Moses will also be available.

Dick Durbin and Ms. Pena were trying to get into our system so that they could follow with you, file the complaint and find out for you. Nonetheless, we're going to ask you when you come up here, they're going to get your information and probably trace your complaint if you filed one with the Commission, so we have a record of it.

Also before you speak you need to know that we're on the Internet today, and if you want to hear yourself speak on the Internet you can log onto our home page and you can listen to what you had to say as well as your fellow citizens. And the rest of the hearings that we'll have likewise will be recorded, so it's important for you to know that.

I going to have Ms. Caldwell explain the -MS. CALDWELL: I'll read the Notice this morning.

The Notice was published in the January 22nd Florida

Administrative Weekly that a meeting will be held at this

time and place.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Okay. And then I'm going to have Mr. Moses read a summary of the Rule we're looking at.

Before he starts -- He may include this in his statement, I don't know what he's going to say.

We have a Rule, it's a draft Rule that we're beginning from; but the reason we're having this hearing is to hear from you. There may be issues and problems that we haven't figured out how to deal with or haven't heard and that's why we need to hear from you. We continue this Rule to try to fix those specific problems that are out there.

Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Chairman Garcia.

As he mentioned, this is strictly a draft rule. We're not really sure exactly what kind of problems technicallywise that the companies may encounter when we are trying to fix some of these problems and we may not be totally aware of all the problems that you have experienced. That's why we're here to listen from you to see if we can help resolve some of these problems.

These rules that I'm about to give you a summary, you can find a copy of those out front of the meeting room here if you want to follow along with it.

The first modification we're doing is with the

billing section of the rules. It's going to try and put some controls back into the customer's hands on due bills, your telecommunication bills. It will provide for a billing block option for the customer to be billed only by their presubscribed local, local toll or sometimes called intralata or your toll services on your local exchange company bill or your local telephone company bills. The telephone number would be provided to the local exchange company's billing entities so that they could ensure that you're no longer going to be charged for anything that you haven't previously authorized.

In addition, the local exchange companies will be providing the appropriate screening codes and dialing blocks for such accounts that are predescribed for this service.

The subsection 12 of the Rules is revised to incorporate the changes from the 1998 Legislature that define the information services as 900 and 976 numbers. It exclusively excluded Internet services in that statute.

The subsection 14 of the rules say, what we're calling the truth in billing portion of the rules which is added, prohibit misleading or unclear advertising that may induce callers to use a service and then be charged hidden fees.

Another modification to the rules is your customer

service number. Many of you have probably experienced a cramming charge, then was given an 800 number to call and then reached a busy continuously or they put you on hold and never answered your call. The rule is added to require companies to maintain and answer their toll-free customer service number for customers to be able to contact the company for further information on the service they may use or have used. Also will require that all advertisements not be misleading and that all rates and surcharges be disclosed to the caller.

And that is the conclusion of the summary of the rules.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Very good. Because we're gonna be on the record here, and Mr. Blue is going to be taking down everything you say and the Internet is going to be taping what you're saying, we're going to have to swear you in. Please don't let that intimidate you. It's part of the process that we do here. It just helps us have something to go on so that our attorneys can rely on the evidence presented by you in making our decision.

And as we start the process I will swear you all in first; and then the Office of Public Counsel, Mr. Beck, will call you up one at a time. He is your attorney here. You don't have to worry about being cross-examined or anything in this type of forum. We may have questions for

you, but they're just simply to understand the nature of 1 2 your problem. And if you -- I don't think there are very many 3 people to sign up, so if you have any concern that you want to discuss with us about the Public Service 5 Commission go right ahead, and those services we regulate. 6 So with that, I'd like to ask that all those who 7 plan to speak today please rise and raise your right hand. 8 In this matter before the Public Service Commission 9 do you swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, 10 11 and nothing but the truth? 12 VOICES: I do. 13 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Mr. Beck, if you please, call the 14 first witness. 15 MR. BECK: Thank you, Chairman Garcia. 16 I'm going to call everybody in the order that you 17 signed up. We'll first call the people that checked the 18 box indicating you wish to speak. And after that, if 19 anybody else wishes to testify we'll give you an 20 opportunity at that time. 21 The first witness is Mr. Joseph Glick. 22 23

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MR. BORRELLO: I have prepared the words that I want go over today. And I wanted this opportunity to testify --

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Mr. Glick, before you start, so I

don't have to interrupt you later in your train of thought, I'm going to ask of everyone, please tell us your name and address. If you'd like to give us your phone, that's fine too.

If you have a problem with having that on the record and it's going to be on the Internet, then we can take it separately. I know Mr. Beck has that information.

But at least give your name and address.

#### THEREUPON:

### JOSEPH M. GLICK

having been previously duly sworn, testified as follows:

MR. BORRELLO: My name is Joseph M. Glick. I live at 4751 Northwest 21st Street in Lauderhill.

I testified last year at your hearing, thinking that I was slammed. But I have since learned from you that what I really was was crammed. Well, whether it's slammed or crammed, I'll be damned if I'm gonna let them get away with it. Perhaps it is because I am retired and do not have much to occupy my time, but I'm able to be meticulous about bills arriving at my home. I check each one for accuracy.

As for the telephone company, I have a notebook in which I record every toll call I make by date, time and number. Checking over my BellSouth bill received in May

of last year I found a page following the AT&T charges. 1 It was headed with the word "HOLD" in large block letters. 2 I assumed that to mean I was not to throw this page away 3 for some reason, but should hold it. I took the word literally. 5 The next line listed Consumer Access as a service 6 In addition to BellSouth and AT&T, the service 7 provider would be about as useful to me as a third crutch 8 would be to a lame man. I was billed \$4.96 for an 9 activation fee and \$4.06 for minimal use fee. Three taxes 10

> I paid the bill, deducting the 10.52 and noted on the bill as follows: Quote:

"The bill on this page is fraudulent and will not be paid. A letter of complaint will be filed with the Federal Communications Commission."

Close quote. And I signed my name.

adds another \$1.50 for a total of 10.52.

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Upon calling BellSouth to complain of this scam, I was told it is required of them to include such billings with my bill.

I then called the FCC in Washington, and was rather shocked but enlightened by what I heard. I was told that such names as "Hold" and "Consumer Access" are mild compared to some of the names of these companies.

As explained to me, one such company is called "I

Don't Care." "I Don't Care." The telemarketer asks if
you want to continue with your present long distance
service. If you are ambivalent about that and answer "I
Don't Care," you're slammed, and subsequently billed by "I
Don't Care."

If you don't check your bills over carefully there's a good chance you will be taken for a sucker. I guess it shouldn't surprise me how often I get billed for calls that were not made on my phone. I subsequently learned that this company called "Hold" is also known as "HBS," which stands for "Hold Billing Services," although its bill do not indicate that "Hold" is a company, not a directive.

I continue to watch for scams. I'm not immune.

I've been scammed before, I probably will be again, but it
won't be because I'm not alert.

Thank you for hearing me.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Thank you very much, Mr. Glick.

If you don't mind staying up here just for a second, just stay at the mike.

What result have you had with your cramming complaint? Did they solve your cramming complaint? I know you filed with this Commission also, if I'm not mistaken.

MR. BORRELLO: Oh, I have the evidence.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: No, no. Your complaint, was it 1 solved? Did they take off the 10.50 charge? 2 MR. BORRELLO: Yes, they did. It was taken off. 3 They credited me. I never paid it, but they sent me a letter crediting the 10.50. 5 6 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: MR. JACOBS: I'm glad that we at least solved that 7 part of it. 8 MR. BORRELLO: If you want evidence I have with me 9 on the case as it went along, you're welcome to it for 10 11 photocopying. CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Thank you, Mr. Glick. 12 MR. JACOBS: Mr. Glick, did you receive any -- after 13 that billing, did you get any charges from anyone? 14 15 MR. BORRELLO: Never get any. 16 MR. JACOBS: No more? 17 MS. MEAGHER: No more. 18 MR. JACOBS: Great. 19 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: I going to have to stop. There's 20 something I want to be considered when we draft this rule 21 is the concept that anything that goes on a bill should be 22 certificated in some way by the Florida Public Service 23 Commission so that the company, like in this case; and I 24 believe "Hold" is one of those companies that does not 25 have a certificate.

MR. MOSES: They do have a certificate. 1 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: They now have a certificate? 2 MS. CALDWELL: It's Consumer Access that doesn't 3 have a certificate. 4 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Regardless, it just strikes me 5 that it would make sense that if you appear on a bill, on 6 a telecommunications company bill, in particular the local 7 company which is essential and an essentiual service, that 8 they need to be in some shape, way or form, that we must 9 have knowledge of them before the local company can bill 10 11 for it. 12 Similarly to the concept that we've got in long 13 In other words, a long distance company that is 14 not certificated can't be billed by a company in Florida. 15 It just strikes me that's something we might want to 16 consider. 17 Mr. Glick, thank you very much for your time and for 18 coming before us. It's important testimony. 19 MS. CALDWELL: I may have some questions. 20 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Okay. 21 MR. BECK: I have no questions. Thank you. 22 MS. CALDWELL: I have a question. 23 Mr. Glick, may I ask you a few questions? 24 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Our attorney wants to ask you more 25 questions. I promise she'll be kind. You need to come

1	to the mike.		
2	MS. CALDWELL: Thank you. Do you know about billing		
3	block options and have you		
4	MR. BORRELLO: I can't hear you. I'm sorry.		
5	MS. CALDWELL: Do you know about billing block		
6	options?		
7	MR. BORRELLO: Billing block options?		
8	CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Right.		
9	MR. BORRELLO: No, I don't.		
10	MS. CALDWELL: Have you contacted BellSouth, your		
11	local exchange company?		
12	MR. BORRELLO: I haven't. About what?		
13	MS. CALDWELL: About what's called a billing block		
14	options where they would take your		
15	MR. BORRELLO: No. I see that in your brochure I		
16	picked up outside.		
17	MS. CALDWELL: I think BellSouth has that available		
18	now that you can request that on your bill.		
19	MR. BORRELLO: Yes. Thank you.		
20	MS. CALDWELL: Okay.		
21	(Thereupon Mr. Glick stepped down.)		
22	MR. BECK: The next witness is Karyl Sparks.		
23	MR. MARLOWE: Good morning, commissioners. I'm Ron		
24	Marlowe. I'm with the Coalition To Ensure Responsible		
25	Billing, which is a coalition of third party billing		
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companies. 1 With me is Karyl Sparks, one of those companies, 2 from Federal Transtel. We're approaching you together 3 because it's likely that you're going to have questions for me that she can answer and vice versa. She's really 5 here as sort of a side item to the coalition representing 6 a number of people. 7 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Hang on one second. It strikes me 8 9 that you will probably be a participant in our rule process. And I would appreciate if we can hear from the 10 11 citizens first, and then I'd love to hear from you. 12 It strikes me that we should hear from citizens who 13 filed testimony; because you will in one shape or another 14 be filing some comments before this commission? 15 MR. MARLOWE: I'm quite sure. 16 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: May I ask you, if it's all right 17 with Public Counsel, that we just skip by you and then you 18 can be our last speaker? 19 MR. MARLOWE: That will be fine with us. 20 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Is that all right, Mr. Beck? 21 MR. BECK: All right. 22 THEREUPON: 23 BEN LANGLEY, 24 having been previously duly sworn,

## JOHN J. BLUE & ASSOCIATES - MIAMI, FLORIDA

testified as follows:

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MR. LANGLEY: Ben Langley. 1 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Good morning, Mr. Langley. 2 MR. LANGLEY: Good morning, sir. 3 My name is Ben Langley; and I have been crammed by 4 four different companies in the last 14 months. 5 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Can I ask you to get closer to the 6 mike so that Mr. Blue can pick it up and so our Internet 7 8 audience can also? MR. LANGLEY: Okay. My problem started back in 9 10 November of 1997. I didn't notice it until December of 1997. On the November bill I had a charge of \$13.88 for 11 12 VOAA, which is Veterans of America Association. And that 13 was for activation of one month fee for voice mail; which I didn't have voice mail, I had an answering machine at 14 15 home. Then I noticed in December again, 694 for the 16 17 Veterans of America Association, \$6.94; and that's when I began calling. I called Southern Bell, who couldn't give 18 19 me any answers. But I did call the VOAA. I had a problem getting 20 21 through to them, but I finally did get through. 22 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: On the bill, did they provide 23 their phone number on the bill? 24 MR. LANGLEY: Well, I have all my bills here. 25 let me check that. Yes, it's a 1-800 number,

800-717-9484. So I did call them in December.

And on my January bill I got another bill for \$6.94 for the VOAA, but also on my bill it says there were \$6.82 which were under investigation, for previous charges.

And I also called the Public Service Commission.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Okay.

MR. LANGLEY: Thanks to the Public Service

Commission, I guess you must have sent a letter to the

VOAA because they sent me a letter.

And they also sent me a magazine. They wanted me to join their organization.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: They're already charging you money. They might as well send you the magazine.

MR. LANGLEY: And in the letter-- They didn't give up. In the letter they say the way of saying thank you they offered me a Transmedia dining card for 49.95.

So that was the first episode.

Then after that, March of 19-- in February of '98 I was also told \$27.76 total for VOAA was under investigation.

On my March bill I got a new one from the CRC, which is the Colorado River Communications, was billing for the USCI. Then I called them. That was calling cards, which of course I never got. And they did admit that somehow it was connected with the VOAA.

So my April bill--

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: If I can ask you, did they also have a phone number, a 1-800 number you can call, or was it the same as VOAA?

MR. LANGLEY: Let's see. Yes. It says for billing questions call 888-474-8724.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Okay.

MR. LANGLEY: And that's who I called.

And April I got a \$5.22 credit from CRC. However, the May bill said that \$5.22 was under investigation. And the June bill I got a bill for \$15.68 for a company called OAN, which is part of Accutel (phonetic). So I-- of course, I started calling them. And that was in June of '98.

July of '98, what was listed as -- I refused to pay this on the Southern Bell bill and they were nice about it, said I didn't have to pay that, it was under investigation. For the July bill "This charge is under investigation for OAM Accutel is \$15.68."

August of '98 I did get a credit from OOA Accutel on my bill for \$15.68.

And then again in December they gave me a total credit of \$31.36 for Accutel.

My bill in November was okay. December I got a brand new company, which is Integretel, who was billing

for American Nortel LD. And that was for \$5.25. One was for a monthly charge and the other was a monthly fee.

So I called the 1-800 number, which is 736-7500, for Integretel; and it's like a boilerroom factory. I was on hold for an hour. They kept-- first they had music on and then they would cut it off and say "why don't you call another time? We're busy now." They went on like that for guite a while.

Then I had -- they would say, "hold on, we'll get to you in a few minutes." And after I finally got to a girl about 20 minutes she was very rude, and I told her what the problem was. And she cut me off and put me on the Spanish line.

So after around 20 minutes I got a Spanish operator and I explained what was going on, said I wanted to talk to a supervisor. So they put me back on line and I talked to another girl who finally gave me the phone number. She didn't want to, but she gave me the phone number for American Nortel.

And I finally did get to talk to a supervisor, who also was very rude; and I spent a whole hour on the phone with Integral.

When I did call American Nortel they were very nice. They answered after about two rings; said they didn't know anything about this bill and that I was never one of their

customers.

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So this month's January bill that I just got, American Nortel, all right, with Integral again, is charging me \$6.44, including two phone calls to Palm Beach county, which normally my calls to Palm Beach county are covered through Southern Bell, or BellSouth now.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Right. What they've done is they've also switched you -- you've also been scrammed. They've probably switched your intralata carrier, which usually is BellSouth in many cases, and it provides that reduced tariffs of 25 cents when they're intralata calls. By switching that carrier, they switched your intralata long distance, so now your long distance is being billed as if it wasn't being provided by your intralata company. So you've been slammed and crammed.

MR. LANGLEY: Well, I have been--

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Mr. Glick has the rest of that.

MR. LANGLEY: I've been with AT&T since -- I can't remember. It's been for 30, 40 years. And I notice now that AT&T is now putting charges on also, which I called their number. All they give me, "sorry about the schools" and all that, the same story all these other people did. It's a con activity charge.

And I called AT&T and it was a recording. You can't talk to a real person there. Because it's a --

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: We've got a real AT&T person 1 in the back of the room, and I suggest that--2 I understand. MR. LANGLEY: 3 Universal Productivity charges 93 cents a month and Carolina charges 85 cents a month. That's been on my bill 5 from AT&T for about six months now. 6 7 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: All right, sir. Well, let me--MR. LANGLEY: Only other thing I have to say is that 8 I don't know if anybody would notice it, but there was a 9 10 gentleman who wrote a letter to the Fort Lauderdale News 11 yesterday who told about this hearing today. He said he'd 12 love to be here but he had to work. He got the same--CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Absolutely. If you'll take this 13 14 we'll put it part of our file. Very good. 15 What we'll try to do is if-- this is a Mr. George 16 Napa-- we'll see if maybe we can get his number through 17 411 and maybe he'd like to send us something. 18 But thank you very much, sir. Can I ask you, you 19 said you called the Commission? 20 MR. LANGLEY: Yes, I did. 21 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Were we helpful? 22 MR. LANGLEY: Very helpful in fact. 23 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Do you recall the person who helped you at the Commission? 24 25 MR. LANGLEY: Yes, I have a letter right here.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Great.

MR. LANGLEY: It's Ellen Plendle, P-L-E-N-D-L-E.

And I also got -- And I also got a letter from you people
a couple days ago inviting me to come to this meeting.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Great. All right. Well, sir, if
I can ask you, sir, has Mr. Plendle--

MR. LANGLEY: It's Ellen Plendle.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Did you give her all this, all the copies of these bills so that we have them in our record?

MR. LANGLEY: No.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Let me ask you a favor. If you can give it to Mr. Durbin, and give him-- obviously your address is on the bill. If we can make a copy here we will, we'll try to do that. If we can't, you can just give us those bills so that we have them as part of the record.

MR. LANGLEY: I have copies of some of them with me.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Fantastic. Give that to Mr.

Durbin and he'll give it to the Court Reporter, and what
we'll do is make that part of the record also. It will be
helpful to us with your testimony, it will sort of
supplement your testimony.

(Thereupon the foregoing instrument was furnished by Mr. Langley to the Commissioners, not to the Court Reporter)

MR. LANGLEY: With the second and third company I

just mentioned the fact that I had been in contact with the Public Service Commission, and they said "We'll drop the charges."

Now, this last one, I'm still fighting the last one. CHAIRMAN GARCIA: You shouldn't be fighting.

First of all, if you don't mind I use you as an example, Mr. Glick made the point very well. When this happens we always like you to give them a try first; and usually invoking the Public Service Commission is very helpful in getting that resolved on the first call.

But if you feel that after that first call you're not making any progress-- and I know it's difficult because our lines are very busy and we I get about 65,000 calls a year-- but if you give us five to ten minutes, no more, we will get to your call.

We will file the case and we will call the company for you. They generally always react to our calls or we start a proceeding and that's a second damage of their ability to do business in our state.

So clearly you did the first right thing, which is to call BellSouth and tell them you're not going to pay, you got something in dispute. Calling the Commission — Calling the company directly is a good move; and you really don't have to wait an hour the way you did. If you're waiting ten minutes and you're not getting service,

call us; that's enough for us to file a complaint with us and we'll take it from there.

But I appreciate that if you could see Mr. Durbin before you leave so that he has a copy of that. Mr.

Durbin will give Mr. Blue a copy if he can and we'll make

that part of the record.

Mr. Beck, do you have any questions of Mr. Langley?

MR. BECK: I just wanted to mention a few things to

Mr. Langley.

You mentioned some of the companies we get lots of complaints about; and I wanted to let you know at least that some actions have been taken or pending. With regard to Hold and Veterans of America, the Federal Trade Commission filed suit last July in Texas against them. I think that suit is still pending. I've got the name and phone number of a person at the Trade Commission if you want to contact them about that.

With regard to Nortel, about two or three months ago the staff of the Commission recommended a show cause order be issued against and that's pending.

After that was done we got another complaint about Nortel from a person in Orlando, so we had filed a second complaint against Nortel as well. We'd like to talk to you too about that because that's a pending case at the PSC.

We appreciate your coming in and providing us with this information. It confirms the things we hear.

MR. JACOBS: Mr. Langley, also, if you are aware of others who have had this kind of experience, they can file comments with the Commission even if they couldn't be here today. There's a form that is available in the back, or they can call the Commission and we will make sure they get access to that.

Or they can do so on the Internet. They can get onto the Internet and file their comments in this proceeding. We welcome all those kinds of comments, particularly if they have your kind of experience.

MR. LANGLEY: I don't know anybody else that has had this problem, but I have been telling all my friends and co-workers and they are all checking their phone bills right now.

MR. JACOBS: Please do so.

MS. CALDWELL: Mr. Langley, I'm Diana Caldwell.

Do you recall getting any information about this services through the mail, or did you get what may appear to be junk mail? Do you recall anything like that coming through to you that may have explained the program?

MR. LANGLEY: No. The only thing was, when I called the PSC they asked me if I had signed up for any contests.

MS. CALDWELL: Right.

MR. LANGLEY: And I told them the only contest I 1 went to was about a year and a half ago to see Barry 2 Manilow out here in Sunrise. You sign up to win a free 3 (garbled) or something. That was the only one. And they 4 sent me a thing about their CDs and things like that. 5 6 I can't think of how they got my name. 7 MS. CALDWELL: Are you aware of a billing block 8 option? 9 MR. LANGLEY: Yes, I am. 10 MS. CALDWELL: Have you had that placed --11 MR. LANGLEY: Well, I don't have a problem right 12 I'm not real happy with AT&T and I'm going to try 13 and determine who my long distance carrier is before I do 14 that; so ... 15 MS. CALDWELL: Did you have to pay for any of the 16 phone calls that you made to these companies trying to 17 straighten out; were you charged for any of that or were 18 they all toll calls? 19 MR. LANGLEY: As far as I know at this time, no. 20 MS. CALDWELL: On your bill would you as a customer 21 prefer to only have telecommunications services allowed to 22 be billed on your bill? 23 MR. LANGLEY: Yes. 24 MS. CALDWELL: So they would be your local, your 25 long distance charges and--

MR. LANGLEY: Right. 1 MS. CALDWELL: -- and telecommunications options, 2 but nothing else? 3 MR. LANGLEY: That's all 5 MS. CALDWELL: All right. Thank you. (Thereupon Mr. Langley stepped down) 6 7 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Okay. Mr. Beck? MR. BECK: Charles Cannon. 8 9 THEREUPON: 10 DR. CHARLES CANNON, having been previously duly sworn, 11 testified as follows: 12 13 DR. CANNON: Good morning. Name's Dr. Charles R. Cannon, Plantation, Florida. 14 15 I have been with BellSouth and AT&T for 35 years. 16 It was brought to my attention in January that we 17 somehow developed a Web site and Internet on the business 18 phone. And then in looking over the bill, AT&T was not on 19 the bill, it was FTT, I believe. I heard the terminology 20 "Hold" here a minute ago. I notice on the back side of 21 that FTT bill, or whatever it was, it had "Hold." 22 And so apparently from what I gather -- I've been on 23 the phone-- I spent two days, six-and-a-half hours on the 24 telephone with AT&T, BellSouth, all the way up to Atlanta, 25 Georgia.

I called your Public Service Commission. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 to. 8 9 10 11 In other words--12 holder? 13 14 15 require. 16 17 18 19 have to have permission. 20 21

And when I called the Public Service Commission that's when I learned the terminology of cramming and slamming. BellSouth employees were not familiar with the words, that I talked to, cramming and slamming. So I called, made a complaint with the PSC. And I've got the name of the lady I talked

But there's a question that I'd like to ask. Couple questions, if I can. And one question, Is there a law that stipulates that the cramming company has to have a written or verbal authorization from the phone account

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Let me have our attorney answer that question for you, and what the existing rules

MS. CALDWELL: Mr. Cannon, at this time, no, there's For slamming we just got rules in effect to change your local, your local calls or your toll service, you

DR. CANNON: You do have to have that?

MS. CALDWELL: The companies have to inform the customer before they can make--

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Could you explain how that authorization works?

For slamming it's just-- She's trying to make a

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distinction here, and let's walk you through it. 1 DR. CANNON: Right. 2 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: We did a series of hearings last 3 year, and at the instigation of the Counsel's office we have been working on it for a while. The Public Counsel's 5 Office sort of pushed us along our way, and the Attorney 6 General, and we came up with a series of rules after we 7 had hearings across the state. 8 Those rules were approved and went into effect in 9 December, if I'm not mistaken? 10 11 MS. CALDWELL: We have it December 28th. CHAIRMAN GARCIA: The end of December. 12 13 Those rules require that you have authorization to change your long distance carrier, and it has to be either 14 15 written or it has to be recorded, if I'm not mistaken. 16 Correct, Ms. Caldwell? 17 MS. CALDWELL: Right. 18 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Written or recorded verification 19 of changes. 20 Now, she was saying on cramming --21 MS. CALDWELL: But cramming is other charges on your 22 bill, such as paging services, traffic line, things like 23 that. The Commission, that's what we're involved with 24 here today, to learn what we can do to eliminate as well 25 as whatever else we can do to get rid of it.

The Federal Communications Commission and Federal 1 2 Trade Commission are also doing rules on the Federal level. From my understanding, their draft rules require 3 verification of these types of things. Those rules are 5 not yet in effect. So both on the Federal level and the lower level 6 we're exploring different ways of verification, different 7 types that we have, we are looking into. 8 9 DR. CANNON: Apparently this company took the word of a part-time worker. And I would say it was a con job, 10 11 a trickery into saying that she wanted to switch, or we wanted to switch. 12 13 They made a tape recording. 14 We asked to have it played back. 15 It was all garbled, and she never did make a 16 definite "yes." So it was a scam. 17 Now, that's another question. Are they allowed to 18 tape the conversation? 19 MS. CALDWELL: Yes. 20 DR. CANNON: Without you knowing it? 21 MS. CALDWELL: No. 22 DR. CANNON: Right. 23 MS. CALDWELL: Before we comment on that, if you're 24 changing your carrier, if you're changing your long-distance carrier or if you're changing your local 25

carrier, they are required to record, or to have a third 1 party verify, record those calls. They either ask you for 2 your permission to record--3 4 DR. CANNON: Right. MS. CALDWELL: -- or they just call to see and 5 6 record. 7 DR. CANNON: Right. Okay. Like I said, I was billed for this Web site and Internet that we never did 8 9 have, didn't even know we had it. It was a surprise to 10 us. The other question, what really hurts is BellSouth 11 says there's nothing they can do. You have to call this 12 13 company. As you know, when you call this company you get this 14 15 big runaround. I've heard the people speak about music and switching you over to a different language. You get 16 17 disconnected. You just can't get in touch with them. 18 If you make connection, then they will transfer you, 19 then you'll get lost again. It's just hours and hours 20 of--21 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Let me tell you that you're 22 absolutely right. That's one sort of the trickery that 23 occurs. 24 But let me tell you your greatest enforcement 25 against BellSouth is simply not paying that part of the

bill which you are in dispute. And what you do is, you get a bill-- I'll make up a number-- for a hundred dollars. And five of those dollars you have dispute. You should send back in your bill, either that or call them up, and say "I wish to dispute these five dollars."

Without the five dollars you pay 95 dollars. You don't pay the full hundred. You don't pay what you have in dispute.

And you let the Commission know you're in dispute after you try to reach the company. And I agree, in most cases you are not gonna be able to reach these companies that are not operating under normal business practices.

But what happens is by doing that you change the burden. Because BellSouth has already collected, has already paid off those people that appear on their bills, in many cases. In other words, they buy the bill from the company that it listed on its bill.

So now BellSouth is out five dollars, and they have to prove that you owe them five dollars.

And because that company wants to continue its affiliation with BellSouth you will find that they will be very quick to either refund BellSouth's money, which in turn is your money which you never paid, or they will find the proof that you did do it.

So that probably the first step and the best step is

to refuse to pay something that you did not do or you did 1 not -- an expense you did not make. 2 DR. CANNON: The pain is just--3 MR. MOSES: Before we go any further, let me add a 4 little clarifying language to what the Chairman just said. 5 What he said is true; but you also have to file a 6 complaint with the Public Service Commission --7 DR. CANNON: Correct. 8 MR. MOSES: -- and put on there that it's in dispute 9 with the Public Service Commission also. Otherwise, Bell 10 may disconnect your local service. 11 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: You've got to file a complaint 12 with us, but you've got to tell them that you're disputing 13 14 that. 1.5 DR. CANNON: Right. 16 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: I mean don't just send five 17 dollars less. You have to tell them exactly what it is 18 you're disputing. 19 DR. CANNON: It's not the five dollars or a hundred 20 dollars overbill that's the problem that we've come 21 It's the law; and I would like to see this law. 22 I don't know if there is such a law; but I was told by --23 MR. MOSES: That's why we're precisely--24 DR. CANNON: Right. 25 MR. MOSES: -- here to do.

1 DR. CANNON: Right. MR. MOSES: So if you've got a suggestion about the 2 law, this is the best place to come. 3 DR. CANNON: I could never get a law from either BellSouth or AT&T or this other company. 5 But the thing that hurts you is when you are 6 disconnected and when you request -- try to get ahold of 7 the other company and you can't get ahold of them to get 8 9 reconnected, you're out of business for five days, a 10 waiting period. 11 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Now, but that's exactly--12 DR. CANNON: Thanks what happened to me. 13 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: I know. But that's why Mr. Moses 14 tried to clarify. I want to walk you through --15 DR. CANNON: Right. 16 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: -- because I think you've got 17 people here who may do that. 18 DR. CANNON: Okay. 19 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: If you found something on your 20 bill, whether it be a penny or whether it be a hundred 21 dollars, and you have a dispute with it, you write the 22 company or call them. And then you call the Commission. 23 You say "I have a dispute with the charge. I did not make 24 this charge." That shifts the burden. 25 They cannot cut off your service, if you file a

dispute with the Commission. 1 DR. CANNON: I filed this speech. 2 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Okay. 3 I kept in touch with BellSouth; and I DR. CANNON: was told that until I can get the okay--5 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: All right. Well, let's see--6 DR. CANNON: -- from FTT I could not be hooked up. 7 And I was not hooked up. 8 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: If that is the case, then 9 10 BellSouth is in violation of our rules. All right? 11 And we will have Mr. Durbin sit with you and walk 12 through the complaint, and we'll ask BellSouth for your 13 particular record. 14 BellSouth cannot cut off your phone service if you 15 have a dispute with a particular charge, whether it be 16 their charge or someone that they're billing for. But 17 they cannot cut off your local service if you file a 18 dispute with the Commission and that dispute has yet to be 19 resolved with our Commission. 20 DR. CANNON: Mr. Chairman, are you're saying there's 21 no law that you to wait five days to be reconnected back 22 to your regular service? 23 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Well, I think that there may be 24 some travel time for them to put you back into service, 25 but it's not supposed to leave you without service for

1 five days. DR. CANNON: Like I said, I was told by BellSouth 2 that if I got ahold of this FTT, that they could 3 immediately hook me back up, but I had to get their 4 permission to go back. So in the meantime we was out of a 5 6 phone five days. MR. JACOBS: There are two things. One is you 7 probably never have been disconnected. 8 9 DR. CANNON: Right. Perhaps it may be the proper procedures 10 MR. JACOBS: 11 weren't followed; and so perhaps in this instance the 12 company, you know, was following -- but we'll confirm that, exactly what happened. 13 14 DR. CANNON: Right. 15 But once you were disconnected, okay, MR. JACOBS: 16 and it's determined that it was done so in error, then, if 17 I'm not mistaken, any normal wait period does not apply. 18 They have to move as expeditiously as possible if your 19 disconnection was in error. 20 If your disconnection was by them following proper 21 procedures, then I think all the guidelines are five days. 22 Is that correct? 23 MR. MOSES: Yes, sir. There's no waiting period as 24 far as the reconnection of service. You should have never

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been disconnected for non-payment of a--

DR. CANNON: I know, I know. 1 2 MR. MOSES: All right. MS. CALDWELL: Dr. Cannon, I think the answer to 3 your question is there are rules currently that if a 4 dispute is lodged and that if you contacted the 5 Commission, that you filed a dispute with the Commission; 6 and there are rules in place that say that if all of those 7 things happen you should not have been disconnected in the 8 9 first place. We also do not have any-- the Commission does not 10 have a rule that says you have to wait five days in order 11 to be reconnected; so there's no requirement by the 12 Commission to make the companies wait. 13 DR. CANNON: Well, I was told that. But yet when I 14 15 requested the law or the statute or law or whatever it 16 was, no one seemed to know about it. 17 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Dr. Cannon, we're gonna go all 18 through that. That should not have happened. 19 MR. MOSES: What makes it really absurd is we do have a rule that for people that request a new service 20 21 they have to be connected within three days. 22 DR. CANNON: That sounds very good. 23 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: That's very true. 24 MR. MOSES: So it's ridiculous that they couldn't 25 reconnect you.

DR. CANNON: Well, there was a lot of confusion even 1 with BellSouth now on the phone, three-way conversation 2 one time. One office, the computer would say I requested 3 to be disconnected; which was not true. 4 And then-- so like I said, I don't know what was 5 wrong with their computers, but they couldn't even look on 6 7 their computers and tell me what was wrong. CHAIRMAN GARCIA: We're gonna have to--8 DR. CANNON: I was definitely told I had to get 9 10 ahold of this company, in which you can't get ahold of. 11 They had to give the okay--CHAIRMAN GARCIA: You do not. 12 13 MS. MEAGHER: --to go back to BellSouth; and then 14 it's a five-day waiting period; and that's the one that kills you, that five-day waiting period. 15 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Right. 16 DR. CANNON: And that should be--17 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: There is no five-day waiting 18 19 period. I mean that should be corrected to--20 DR. CANNON: 21 and let the companies know that you don't have to get a 22 release from this cramming or slamming company and you 23 don't have to wait five days. 24 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Okay. 25 MR. MOSES: Let me ask you one other question.

what you just said, something else occurred to me. 1 Is it possible that this company that you had this 2 cramming with is a competitive local exchange company that 3 is actually trying to switch your service, is why Bell 4 entered into this problem? 5 DR. CANNON: Well, I was with BellSouth for 35 6 years; and then I get this bill from FTT, who I don't even 7 know who they are. 8 MR. MOSES: Did they ever tell you what "FTT" stood 9 for? 10 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Can I see the bill? 11 This is -- Yes. And then, you just 12 DR. CANNON: mentioned "Hold" on the back page, it says "Hold"; and 13 14 this is a billing service, this is not this company. 15 MR. MOSES: Okay. 16 DR. CANNON: So the billing-- you finally get ahold of the billing service and they say you got to call the 17 18 It's just a runaround. company. 19 MR. MOSES: Right. 20 MS. CALDWELL: Were you given an 800 number by 21 BellSouth? To call up and--22 I called BellSouth; and I ended up DR. CANNON: 23 somewhere in Atlanta, Georgia, with BellSouth; and they 24 are the ones that blamed it on PSC. They were in Atlanta, 25 Georgia.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Dr. Cannon, you need to be at the 1 2 mike so Mr. Blue can hear you. 3 DR. CANNON: (Inaudible) CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Doctor, let me just suggest this, next time. If you file a dispute with us, with the 5 Commission, and you tell your local company that you're 6 7 disputing parts of the bill, they cannot cut your service. You cannot be charged. 8 Let me go further. In slamming cases, believe it or 9 10 not, the first 30 days will be free, if someone bills-- if 11 someone slammed you, changed your long-distance carrier 12 without your authorization. Okay? 13 DR. CANNON: Yes. MS. SPARKS: As a representative of FTT, I would 14 15 like to look into this case myself and report to you, Dr. 16 Cannon, and also to the Commissioners. 17 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Hang on, hang on. You need to 18 speak into the mike, because Mr. Blue's not getting it. 19 Why don't you let me see the bill. 20 MS. SPARKS: Commissioners, I would like to have a 21 chance to look into Dr. Cannon's account and report back 22 to him personally, and also to you, find out what we can 23 on this. 24 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Absolutely, absolutely. 25 Do me a favor. Let's make a copy of the Doctor's

bill, and that way we can also leave that as part of the 1 record; if you don't mind, Doctor? 2 DR. CANNON: Fine. 3 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Great. 4 (Thereupon the foregoing instrument was furnished to 5 6 Chairman Garcia) CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Doctor, do you have anything else 7 to add? Or--8 9 MR. BECK: I'd like to ask a few questions. 10 DR. CANNON: Sure. MR. BECK: Dr. Cannon, when did you first notice the 11 12 charges on your bill? DR. CANNON: I don't have an exact date, but it was 13 approximately two weeks ago. It was in January. 14 MR. BECK: So the charges were for putting in a Web 15 16 site? 17 DR. CANNON: On the bill, it says -- that's how I 18 noticed this-- it said Web site and Internet, which we 19 don't have. Then I noticed it was a different company. 20 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Okay. 21 MR. BECK: Did they switch your other telephone 22 company, either for local or long-distance also, or is 23 this just as cramming charge? 24 DR. CANNON: It was a little confusing. I first 25 thought it was AT&T, because I had a BellSouth bill, so I

thought it was long distance. 1 But my local phone got cut off. BellSouth cut it 2 off. So I don't know, there's a mixup there. Maybe you 3 can figure the bill out. 4 MR. BECK: Once your local phone service was cut off 5 I gather you contacted BellSouth right away? 6 DR. CANNON: 7 Yes. MR. BECK: And what did they -- Did they say they 8 wouldn't turn it on for five days? What happened then? 9 10 DR. CANNON: They said I had to call the billing 11 company there and have permission to go back with them, 12 and there's a five-day waiting period. 13 MR. BECK: So your business was without phone 14 service for five days? 15 DR. CANNON: Right, right. Within three or four 16 days they got the phone working to where it was only a 17 certain area; in other words, people in Pompano, Deerfield 18 or Hollywood couldn't get through. 19 But there were certain-- I don't know why they did 20 this -- some numbers could get through; but it was not 21 operating properly. 22 MR. BECK: Were you ever able to talk to anybody at 23 FTT? 24 DR. CANNON: Yes. 25 MR. BECK: What did they tell you?

Well, they said they had permission to DR. CANNON: 1 do this; and they tape-recorded. 2 We requested to get the tape. We heard the tape on 3 phone; it was all garbled. 4 It was a part-time worker; and like I said, you have 5 to interpret the tape yourself. 6 But this I -- if I disconnect my home phone, it's in 7 my name. If my wife wants to hook it back up, she can't 8 hook it back up the same number, she's got to get her own 9 10 number. I don't understand how a person, a part-time worker, 11 could get scammed into changing service, and they never 12 did get authorization from the account holder, written or 13 verbal. That I think you-all need to look into, and I'm 14 15 sure you are looking into it. But the fact it occurred is what kills you. 16 17 not the money, it's the waiting period without a phone. 18 And like I said, I requested to get this law; but as you said, I don't think there is such a law, never was a 19 I wanted to clear that up. 20 21 MR. BECK: Thank you, Doctor. 22 DR. CANNON: And I appreciate it. I hope you can 23 solve some of these problems. 24 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: We'll get back to you. If you can 25 just sit with Mr. Durbin for a moment and he's gonna get

	1	all your information and a copy of the bill. And maybe		
<u> </u>	2	we'll need the rest of them.		
	3	Ma'am, if you'll hold a second.		
	4	MS. SHELFER: Okay.		
	5	CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Thank you.		
	6	MR. BECK: One other question, just to make sure.		
	7	Has Dr. Cannon's service been reinstated? I mean		
	8	DR. CANNON: It is now.		
	9	MR. BECK: Okay.		
	10	DR. CANNON: Reinstated.		
	11	CHAIRMAN GARCIA: And you were out five days?		
	12	DR. CANNON: Five days.		
	13	CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Okay.		
`	14	DR. CANNON: I had to check it. Seemed like two		
	15	weeks.		
	16	MS. SHELFER: Did you get your charges removed, did		
	17	you get your Web site charges removed? Or haven't you		
	18	paid it yet?		
	19	DR. CANNON: We haven't paid it yet.		
	20	CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Thank you, Doctor. Appreciate it.		
	21	(Thereupon Dr. Cannon stepped down)		
	22	MR. BECK: Roger Borrello.		
	23	THEREUPON:		
	24	ROGER F. BORRELLO, ESQ.,		
_	25	having been previously duly sworn,		

testified as follows: 1 2 MR. BORRELLO: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I read in the paper this morning where you-all were 3 having a hearing, and -- so I'm really not prepared with 5 any paperwork. CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Let me ask you a favor. Could 6 7 you, if you don't mind, give us your address, so we've got it? 8 MR. BORRELLO: Yes. My address is 300 Northwest 9 10 70th Avenue in Plantation. 11 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Thank you. 12 COURT REPORTER: Spell your name, please? 13 MR. BORRELLO: Roger F as in Frank, Borrello, 14 B-O-R-R-E-L-L-O. 15 I'm a sole practitioner attorney. Have been so in 16 Plantation for approximately 27 years. 17 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Great. 18 MR. BORRELLO: And I don't know whether I have been 19 slammed or crammed, but as I stand before you I'm 20 bleeding. Because if you would call my office right now, 21 or if you could call as of Monday, you'd get a ringing 22 sound but nobody would answer. Meantime it wouldn't be 23 answering in my office. I do not have incoming service, 24 and I haven't had since Monday. And I have been 25 desperately seeking to try to get restored.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Okav. 1 MR. BORRELLO: Now, a little background--2 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Have you gotten a bill? 3 MR. BORRELLO: A bill? No, I haven't had a bill. 4 5 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Okay. The bill is really not the issue. 6 MR. BORRELLO: The issue here is that I've been cut off from 7 incoming calls. And it stems, I believe, from a mistake 8 9 that I made in August, as it turns out, in responding to street people that came in representing AT&T, soliciting 10 local service, based upon the rules which now allow that 11 12 competition. And I listened to their pitch. And it made 13 sense; big company, AT&T, I signed up for it. 14 Well, I didn't hear anything other than I received a call saying that the hookup was gonna be delayed. And 15 finally I went to my office, around December 14th I 16 believe it was, and my phones were completely inoperable. 17 What's going on? Not even knowing or thinking about AT&T. 18 19 And the changever had been forgotten, actually. 20 And I called BellSouth; and BellSouth tells me, 21 "well, you got to go with AT&T now because you switched 22 over." 23 And I contacted AT&T-- which is a very, very, very 24 difficult thing to do, because you are referred to --25 First of all, you don't have a number.

like it's 611, as you do with BellSouth. And you're referred to another number, and you end up maybe in Arizona or California, and you report the problem to them.

Seeing that it was going to be a frustrating situation in trying to deal with AT&T, I said, "Look, I do not want your service."

I called the Public Service Commission, and a lady was very kind and helpful to me at the Public Service Commission. I related to her that I did not want to make that switch, but if this was what was gonna be involved in it.

And she put me in contact with BellSouth Corporate

Office. And I was informed at that time that because the service hadn't been completely turned over to AT&T, whatever that meant, that I could stay with BellSouth.

I said "Well, great, let's do that."

There's only one thing; that you have to have AT&T contact BellSouth to let them know, because you can't tell -- you can't cancel the order, AT&T has to.

I was given a special number for BellSouth in Atlanta which handles these transitions. But it was then necessary for AT&T to contact them.

I called AT&T and said, "Please call them to cancel this changeover."

In the meantime, BellSouth had deferred the turnoff

to December of '99, to give me time to straighten out the problem.

Well, finally, after making calls to BellSouth to see if they had gotten that word from AT&T and finding out that they hadn't, I then initiated a three-way conversation between a representative of BellSouth in Georgia, had a special 800 number at this unit that handles these changeovers, with a representative of AT&T on the phone and said, "Hey, look. I do not want AT&T."

AT&T said you tell them that; they did. And supposedly everything was cancelled out, I was gonna stay with BellSouth. That was communicated, all companies were in agreement. And fine; my service was resumed. I was without a phone for approximately a day, which seemed like a year, but it was a day.

And I thought that everything was fine until I went into my office on Monday and found that I could not receive incoming calls. And that was very suddenly found out as my grandson practically got stranded at nursery school because his mother thought I was picking him up and I thought that she was, because she couldn't beep me back, and I thought she didn't want to beep me back because she had already made plans.

And that's how I found the problem. I'm not getting calls. What's going on?

Anyway, I do not have incoming service calls. 1 contacted -- at my house on Monday evening when I realized 2 it, I called repair 611 and reported it. They said "we'll 3 have you up by tomorrow at noon." I went into the office yesterday, on Tuesday, and I 5 couldn't dial out and I can't receive. I hit 611. 6 7 And all of the sudden I get "If you want to call PCG" -- it referred you to an 800 number. 8 9 I said, "wait a minute, what is this? That's not 10 BellSouth." And I called that number and I said, "Who are you?" 11

And they are the repair service for AT&T. obvious that I'm on AT&T right now, even though that deal was supposed to be dead.

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And when I called Southern Bell, they told me, "No, you're with us."

I said, "Well, let's fix the problem here. gotta have my phones."

I called AT&T -- I'm trying to think of the sequence; I have it all written in the office -- and they said, "Well, no, you're not with us. We have no record of your being with us."

Meantime, I am, I am with them. Because if you dial 611, if you dial the operator, it says "boing, PCG" or something like that.

And at this point, the last that I heard was yesterday about 5:30; and I spent the entire day, virtually the entire day, making calls back and forth, being put on hold for ten and 15 minutes at a time.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Mr. Borrello, why didn't you-- I thought at some point you said you had called our staff, called the Commission?

MR. BORRELLO: Well, I had trust up to this point, until I received word yesterday-- yesterday-- that, "no, it appears that you are with AT&T." And that happened at about 5:30. The business office was closed. They said they'd referred me to the business office of Southern Bell.

So I saw this; and I must tell you my tale of woe.

But I'm not alone. Because back in December when this
happened, after I thought I had rectified my problem, on
the following Monday a client of mine, who has been in
business, the automotive business, in Plantation for many
years, his phones were dead. He ended up, because he
signed up with AT&T, without phones for about a week and a
half.

A neighbor of his, a neighboring business, was without phone service for a day on Friday.

And I received a call yesterday from a gentleman who has a very substantial business who's been without phones

JOHN J. BLUE & ASSOCIATES - MIAMI, FLORIDA

for about a week.

This is not an individual problem. It's a more wide-encompassing problem, as you are or should be aware of the fact that competitors are coming in now trying to grab local service, not ready to do it, technically, technically, and dealing with a reluctant BellSouth who's not cooperating. And what's happening is, the consumer is bleeding, is suffering, in this war between the giants.

And as I stand before you, if you call my office, the phone will ring in my home. My wife will answer the phone, and then ring me on a cellular in my office so that I can then call you back. And I'm trying to make a living.

And this is my tale of woe, which exists as we sit here right now.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Let me ask you several questions.

First off, I know we have a representative of AT&T, and they probably can get ahold of someone if AT&T is the company involved. And obviously we have BellSouth here.

I guarantee you your service will be back and functioning before the end of the next hour.

MR. BORRELLO: Well, it shouldn't have to take this--

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: It should not have to; but that's

the second part I'm going to ask you.

Obviously we have what you've described to us. If you can sit with one of our analysts and walk through it and give us -- the description, we already have that -- but we're gonna find out from AT&T, from PCG and from AT&T what precisely happened. This should not happen.

And I'll ask you also, not to give that on the record but just let our people know the people that you know that this has happened to--

MR. BORRELLO: Yes.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: -- so we can call them up. You know, they may not want to do this, but if they do -- because clearly, this should not happen. This is one of the issues that has been very important and prominent to the Commission that clearly, as you head into a competitive atmosphere, sometimes the competitors are looking out for each other and not taking care of the customer who gets stuck in the middle, especially --

MR. BORRELLO: Or using the inconvenience to the customer as a tool in achieving their own objectives.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Right. It should not have happened.

MR. BORRELLO: I don't enjoy being the monkey in the middle--

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Absolutely.

MR. BORRELLO: -- which is what I am right now. 1 This has cost you a lot of money, CHAIRMAN GARCIA: 2 3 I'm sure; and clearly--MR. BORRELLO: I'm more concerned about the fact that people may have need to speak to me and they can't 5 reach me. 6 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Right. I understand. 7 MR. BORRELLO: Thank you very much. 8 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Thank you, Mr. Borrello. 9 (Thereupon Mr. Borrello stepped down.) 10 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Before we call Ms. Sparks and Mr. 11 Marlowe, are there any other customers who would like to 12 address the Commission? 13 Would you please come up and state your name. 14 MS. MEAGHER: My name is Robin Meagher. I'm a new 15 resident of Florida, actually just moved here from 16 17 Washington, D. C. I live in Oakland Park, and I believe 18 they have my number and address up front. 19 My previous occupation, I was a Legislate Director 20 for a Congressman in Washington, Bart Fordham (phonetic) 21 from Tennessee; and he introduced legislation last 22 session, HR 3990, with Congressman Dingle (phonetic) on 23 cramming. So I have a great deal of background in 24 cramming and the problem and coming up with solutions. 25 I just noticed in the paper this morning that you

were having this hearing today, so I don't have any prepared remarks; but I would like to submit something here in writing or perhaps at one of your subsequent workshops.

But I do commend the Commission for having these workshops out in the public, getting people to come in and tell you exactly what their problems have been. I know with my former boss's experience this has been a problem at Tennessee as well, and their Public Utility Commission has been working on it as well.

Bottom line, among other solutions that have been proposed I'd like to commend the Commission as well as some of the companies that have gone about hearing this and consumer education. I think, bottom line, that's gonna be the way we reach people, and simplify the procedures when some unauthorized charge appears on your phone bill to make it one number, easily identifiable on your phone bill, to call and get it removed so you don't have to call perhaps whoever's your local service provider or who the billing house might be or the company that's submitting it to them.

There are many different players in this sequence; and I do hope that the Commission listens to all of them and that we can do what's in the best interests of the consumer, because that's the bottom line.

And if there's any, anything I can do to help the 1 staff, I'd be more than happy to do so. 2 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Ms. Meagher, let me-- We've got 3 your information and we'll send you some information that we provided. 5 I think, under the Chairmancy of Julie Johnson, who 6 was my predecessor, we're sure you probably had a chance 7 to meet her in Washington, you know, and she did of this 8 9 cramming issue--10 MS. MEAGHER: Right. CHAIRMAN GARCIA: -- and slamming issue. And we, 11 12 for the first time, built the TIBIA (phonetic). And we 13 were one of the first commissions in the country. 14 And in the last year, when we started these slamming 15 commercial acts, it was done very generically. In fact, I 16 believe that Tennessee is one of the states that copied --17 the Public Service used our commercials, just changed the 18 wording on it. 19 But we have received many more slamming complaints. 20 People don't know what being slammed is. 21 MS. MEAGHER: Right. 22 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: You know something's wrong. 23 you're absolutely right. 24 And this year I believe Representative Rojas, who is 25 a Representative from South Florida, is going to file, in

1 the State House, is filing a bill asking for about a 2 million dollars for public education for the Commission. So hopefully that, combined with what we had in the 3 budget, and we're gonna get-- we'll probably do a much more aggressive Public Affairs campaign explaining a lot 5 of these issues. 6 So thank you very much, and thank you for your 7 supporting us. 8 9 MS. MEAGHER: That's great. And I encourage the companies themselves to do more consumer education. 10 11 MR. JACOBS: Miss Meagher, I assume that the Federal 12 legislation didn't become a law? 13 MS. MEAGHER: No, sir. It was introduced in the 14 summer of last year, 3990. 15 MR. JACOBS: Right. 16 MS. MEAGHER: And no. There was one hearing held in 17 the House Telecommunications Subcommittee, but it did die. 18 MR. JACOBS: It occurs to me that one of the ways to 19 qet at this problem is to have some liability for the 20 billing companies like the FTC or some regulatory 21 oversight over them. Was there any approach to that, any thought given to 22 23 that, do you know? 24 MS. MEAGHER: We evaluated many, many solutions when 25 drafting the legislation, and basically came up with the

idea that we should defer to the Federal Trade Commission, who has the authority over unfair billing practices, under the Telephone Disclosure And Dispute Resolution Act.

MR. JACOBS: I'm wondering if in our proceedings we should-- and this is why I'm interested-- should we do a filing to the FTC when we find those companies who continually show up. Is there a way that we can refer that information to the FTC?

MS. MEAGHER: Absolutely. I mean Winkleman -- or, I have her name-- she's head of the Consumer Affairs at the Federal Trade Commission -- and that's something that I think needs to be done is to share information between the State and the Federal --

MR. JACOBS: I would support that.

MS. MEAGHER: -- as well as the names of the people who are running fraudulent companies.

> MR. JACOBS: Okay. Thanks.

MR. MOSES: Commissioner Jacobs, we referred -- I was to the FTC periodically-- and we've also been queried by the FTC when they're investigating a particular company that they know is operating in Florida, they're gonna call us and even inquire for information on them; so that has

MS. MEAGHER: Great.

MR. MOSES: And we're also filing comments to be

brought before you at an Internal Affairs next month, or it may be this month, to comment on their proposed ruling that they have open at this time.

MR. JACOBS: Okay, great.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Thank you, ma'am.

MS. MEAGHER: Thank you.

(Thereupon Ms. Meagher stepped down.)

MR. BECK: Thank you.

Commissioners, I think right after the Washington conference the Federal Trade Commission is gonna have a public meeting for two days also. It's right after that, in Washington.

Next witnesses, Miss Sparks and Mr. Marlow.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: I've got some hesitation here.

I know you called before coming here. The only hesitation I have is that I'm getting a feeling of two bites at the apple here. In other words, if you're gonna participate in the process in a formal way as a party before this Commission on the rule-making docket it almost strikes me that maybe this is not the proper venue for you to express them.

That said, you're here, we've already finished the public comment, and I don't think anyone would be hurt or interests would be affected. I just would request that you sort of keep the discussion light; because clearly

you're going to participate in a formal manner before this body, and if we allow you, I'm sure that BellSouth and AT&T and a whole host of other companies could use this as a forum; and we'd rather do it in a more formal process before the Commission, and in more of a formal way.

MR. BECK: Okay. I understand, Commissioner. Very good.

# THEREUPON:

# RONALD J. MARLOWE, ESQ.,

having been previously duly sworn,

# testified as follows:

MR. MARLOWE: Ron Marlowe, on behalf of Martens,
Dunaj, and Marlowe, 201 South Biscayne Boulevard, Suite
880, Miami, Florida, 33131, here representing Federal
Transtel as well as CERB, which is the Coalition to Ensure
Responsible Billing.

The purpose of our attendance today-- Here with me is Karyl Sparks, who is with Federal Transtel.

The purpose of our being here today is to show you that we are interested in what the public perceives as the issues, to hear the types of problems that consumers are experiencing, in order to better prepare for the formal rule-making process when we may have some input into some of the things that the Commission is proposing, specifically with respect to the block and the customer

service issues.

when listening to the consumer complaints is that this is a large industry, it is an industry where Bell has sort of a special role, and any solution that is proposed should be designed in such a way as to ensure that the consumer has equal access to the third-party billing services that they would have from that.

And one of the problems that we perceive-- and we don't have an answer for it; perhaps in the rule-making process we will-- is the simple idea of "well, let's just block all third-party billing" puts the lack (phonetic) at a distinct advantage, obviously, in billing services like paging services, Internet access, to --

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: If you're concerned, if you're concerned-- and I believe, if I'm not mistaken, that certain companies are starting to take more aggressive action in that area. They haven't done it through the Commission, they've done it on their own; and it has been a concern that I've had.

In fact, we had, if I'm not mistaken, GTE, make a presentation about how they're handling third-party billings; and they've adopted their own rigorous standard.

But your issues sort of did strike me as, you know, if they're setting at the bar it kind of gives them an

advantage in those areas. 1 MR. MARLOWE: Yes. Well, obviously, to the extent 2 that let's us "Well, all right, you put a block, a 3 third-party billing block, where you can get the pager 4 service from us and the Internet access from us"--5 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Correct. 6 MR. MARLOWE: -- "the voice mail from us, but you 7 8 can't get it from anybody else," if there's not some 9 exception process--10 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Correct. 11 MR. MARLOWE: -- that's combined to allow that to 12 occur. That's obviously what our concern is and I fear 13 how we can mesh that with the public. CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Absolutely. Absolutely. 14 15 MR. MOSES: Is there anything that precludes you 16 from doing direct bills? 17 MS. SPARKS: The majority of customerse have a phone 18 bill. The majority of customers don't have a Visa. 19 Direct billing is entirely too expensive to do. We 20 actually did a venture into direct billing last year, and 21 it just proved too expensive. 22 You have access to every customer through their 23 phone bill, and it's just the easiest way to bill, and it 24 keeps the market competitive.

25

MR. MOSES: But going with that theory, Burdines and

everybody else that does any kind of billing would have the same problem. Seems to me like if you're gonna get into the business, do your own billing; don't go through the local exchange company, if that seems to be the anti-competitive nature.

MR. MARLOWE: Mr. Moses, you and I know each other from some other companies that I have represented and have been in front of the Commission before; and some of those have tried the direct billing aspect before. This is unique and somewhat different than --

MR. MOSES: Let me ask you something; and I'm sorry,
I started this. Let's not let this get into a debate.

This is formal debate that we're going to have when we propose this rule; and I anticipate and look forward to this discussion there.

But if you have something to sort of address the public with, fine; but you've only got two Commissioners here, you don't have all the industry here, which is their choice, but that's fine. This isn't probably the proper forum for us to get back and forth on this.

MR. MARLOWE: And nor was it our intention that-MR. MOSES: No, no. It's my own fault. My own
fault.

MR. MARLOWE: We just wanted to let the Commission know that we were here, that we will be present tonight at

Miami for the same reason, in case we have somebody like we had today with Dr. Cannon comes up, has a problem that we can step in and investigate it and report back.

And if it's all right with the Commission, I'll do that directly with Rick Moses, and he can pass that on to you.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Absolutely.

MR. MARLOWE: Perfect.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Absolutely.

MR. MARLOWE: I did give to Mr. Moses a copy of some of the policies of CERB.

It is a newly-formed organization, back in October. It is an industry organization. The idea is to self-police. We're hoping that as we becoming aware of members who are having problems that we can begin our own internal enforcement, because obviously an industry organization can do a lot more than the Commission can do, and that's our goal.

So we hope that we can work closely with the Commission staffers in finding out problems within the industry with members so that we can take internal enforcement action.

MR. MOSES: Very good. Mr. Marlowe, I appreciate it, and I appreciate Ms. Sparks being here, just like I appreciate Ms. Conzano (phonetic) representing WorldCom

MCI here.

It meant a great deal, I think, to the companies who participate in our slamming. They got a better understanding of what our staff was looking at, and I think it made their representation in the final product a little bit stronger than others who had no idea what we've been working on for a while.

MR. MARLOWE: Thank you, Commissioner. We look forward to working more closely with you during the whole matter.

MR. MOSES: I appreciate those comments that you made. It's something that's been troubling me for a while although I may have not articulated it as well as you did, and I hope that will be part of it, because I do believe that where we step in on the question of third-party billing it should be uniform. In other words, companies should not have a standard that's different than the Commission's, if that standard is used to affect issues in an anti-competitive manner.

I ask Staff to also consider that when we're writing the rule and making sure that that is one of the issues that we make everyone aware of.

MR. MARLOWE: Thank you, Commissioner. Appreciate your time.

MR. MOSES: Thank you very much.

1	MR. BECK: Miss Sparks, could you just very briefly
2	tell us what Federal Transtel does? What's your business
3	in?
4	THEREUPON:
5	KARYL A. SPARKS,
6	having been previously duly sworn,
7	testified as follows:
8	MS. SPARKS: Federal Transtel is a third-party
9	billing company. We have been in business for five years;
10	and we bill for ancillary products; voice mail, paging,
11	Internet access, Web listing and design.
12	We do not bill long distance.
13	MR. BECK: All right. So you're kind of like Hold.
14	You're a billing service; you don't provide the service
15	itself?
16	MS. SPARKS: Right. We bill on behalf of clients.
17	MR. BECK: Thank you.
18	CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Very good.
19	Mr. Beck, I think that completes our list.
20	MR. BECK: Unless there's anybody else who would
21	like to address the Commission.
22	CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Great. Yes.
23	MS. CALDWELL: I have some closing comments.
24	I'd like to thank everybody for being here. And we
25	are having a workshop again tonight in Miami, Florida, at

6:00 p.m. at the Radisson Mart Plaza Hotel.

In addition, in our special report we have listed the other sites that we're having additional workshops. We ask that anybody who also wants to send us written information, you're welcome to do that as well.

After we go through these workshop processes we will probably have one more workshop industry. Staff will then take a proposal, a draft, to the Commission for their review. They may add or take away from the things staff proposes.

There will be a Notice, there will be an option for parties essentially to ask for a hearing or additional formal comments to those proposed rules.

After that, we will then take the rules back to the Commission for comments for final hearing for a final adoption by the Commission; so that sort of the process that we have been following. This rule is very complicated, so unfortunately it will take some time to go through the process, but we hope we will have something that will be delivered at the final effective ruling.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Ms. Caldwell, do we have a date on the workshop in Tallahassee, the more formalized one with the parties?

MS. CALDWELL: Not with the industry.

CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Okay. Very good.

1	Thank you very much, Mr. Beck.
2	Thank you, everyone. We'll see you at 6:00.
3	(Thereupon the hearing was concluded at 11:35 a.m.)
4	* * * * * * *
5	
6	REPORTER'S HEARING CERTIFICATE
7	STATE OF FLORIDA )
8	: ss.
9	COUNTY OF DADE )
10	I, JOHN J. BLUE, Registered Professional Reporter and Notary Public, State of Florida, certify that I was
11	authorized to and did stenographically report the foregoing proceedings and that the transcript is a true
12	and complete record of my stenographic notes.
13	I further certify that I am not an attorney or counsel of any of the parties herein, nor am I a relative
14	or employee of any of the parties' attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested
15	in the action.
16	Dated this 12th day of February, 1999.
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