

Union Calendar No. 576

106TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 3011

[Report No. 106-978]

To amend the Communications Act of 1934 to improve the disclosure of information concerning telephone charges, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 5, 1999

Mr. BLILEY (for himself and Mr. TAUZIN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce

OCTOBER 12, 2000

Additional sponsors: Mr. PICKERING, Mrs. NORTHUP, Mr. TERRY, and Mr. VITTER

OCTOBER 12, 2000

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic]

A BILL

To amend the Communications Act of 1934 to improve the disclosure of information concerning telephone charges, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Truth in Telephone
3 Billing Act of 1999”.

4 **SEC. 2. TELEPHONE BILLING PRACTICES.**

5 (a) **AMENDMENT.**—Section 258 of the Communica-
6 tions Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 258) is amended by adding
7 at the end the following new subsection:

8 “(e) **TRUTH-IN-BILLING.**—A telecommunications
9 carrier that is required to contribute to, or that is other-
10 wise assessed for, any support mechanism under section
11 254, or any other governmental mechanism, fund, tax, or
12 program, shall identify on each subscriber’s bill—

13 “(1) the identity of the governmental mecha-
14 nism, fund, tax, or program to which the contribu-
15 tion or assessment is made, and the identity of the
16 governmental authority whose rules require or au-
17 thorize the contribution or assessment;

18 “(2) the basis for the contribution or assess-
19 ment (such as per subscriber, per line, or percentage
20 of some or all charges or revenues); and

21 “(3) as a separate line-item, the dollar amount
22 that is being attributed to and collected from such
23 subscriber for such governmental mechanism, fund,
24 tax, or program.”.

1 (b) ~~CONFORMING AMENDMENT.~~—Section 258 is fur-
2 ther amended by striking the designation and heading of
3 such section and inserting the following:

4 **“SEC. 258. BILLING PRACTICES.”**

5 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

6 *This Act may be cited as the “Truth in Telephone Bill-*
7 *ing Act of 2000”.*

8 **SEC. 2. TELEPHONE BILLING PRACTICES.**

9 (a) *AMENDMENT.*—Section 258 of the Communications
10 Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 258) is amended by adding at the
11 end the following new subsections:

12 “(c) *TRUTH-IN-BILLING.*—A telecommunications car-
13 rier that is required to contribute to, or that is otherwise
14 assessed for, any support mechanism under section 254, or
15 any other governmental mechanism, fund, tax, or program,
16 shall identify on each subscriber’s bill, in simple, plain lan-
17 guage (of no more than one line of text per dollar
18 amount)—

19 “(1) *the identity of the governmental mechanism,*
20 *fund, tax, or program to which the contribution or as-*
21 *essment is made, and the identity of the govern-*
22 *mental authority whose rules require or authorize the*
23 *contribution or assessment;*

1 “(2) the basis for the contribution or assessment
2 (such as per subscriber, per line, or percentage of
3 some or all charges or revenues); and

4 “(3) as a separate line-item, the dollar amount
5 that is being attributed to and collected from such
6 subscriber for such governmental mechanism, fund,
7 tax, or program.

8 “(d) *PROHIBITION OF EXCESS CHARGES.*—If any tele-
9 communications carrier that is subject to subsection (c) dis-
10 closes to its subscribers under paragraph (3) of such sub-
11 section a total dollar amount for any billing period that
12 exceeds the total dollar amount such carrier contributes to
13 or is assessed for the applicable governmental mechanism,
14 fund, tax, or program for such billing period, such carrier
15 shall be liable for a forfeiture penalty equal to the amount
16 of such excess, in addition to any other penalties for which
17 the carrier may be liable under title V. The Commission
18 may, by rule, provide for the distribution of any forfeiture
19 penalties collected under this subsection to the affected sub-
20 scribers.”.

21 (b) *CONFORMING AMENDMENT.*—Section 258 is further
22 amended by striking the designation and heading of such
23 section and inserting the following:

1 **“SEC. 258. BILLING PRACTICES.”.**

2 **SEC. 3. STUDY REQUIRED.**

3 (a) *STUDY OF SUBSIDY SYSTEM REQUIRED.*—The
4 *Comptroller General shall conduct a study of the implicit*
5 *and explicit subsidies from the government, taxpayers, and*
6 *consumers to providers and consumers of telecommuni-*
7 *cations services, including subsidies in support of universal*
8 *service required by section 254 of the Communications Act*
9 *of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 254), the systems for the collection and*
10 *distribution of support for rural and high cost areas, lifeline*
11 *services, connections of schools and libraries to the Internet,*
12 *and rural health care services.*

13 (b) *REPORT.*—*Within one year after the date of enact-*
14 *ment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to*
15 *the Congress a report on the results of the study conducted*
16 *under subsection (a).*

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