

BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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In re: Proposed tariff filings by)
SOUTHERN BELL TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH)
COMPANY clarifying when a nonpublished)
number can be disclosed and introducing)
Caller ID to TouchStar Service)

Docket No. 891394-TI
Filed: October 2, 1990

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF JOYCE M. BROWN

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BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF

JOYCE M. BROWN

DOCKET NO. 891194-TI

1 Q. PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME AND OCCUPATION OR AFFILIATION.

2 A. My name is Joyce M. Brown, Woman's Advocate for the
3 Center Against Spouse Abuse, Inc. (CASA), a program for
4 survivors of domestic violence and their children in St.
5 Petersburg, Florida. I am also Co-Chair of the Women of Color
6 Caucus of the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence
7 (FCADV).

8 Q. WHAT IS YOUR EDUCATIONAL AND WORK BACKGROUND?

9 A. I have an A.S. Degree in Criminal Justice. I have worked
10 for CASA for the past six months and recently was elected Co-
11 Chair of the Women of Color Caucus of FCADV. In addition, I
12 have worked for the Department of Corrections and for HRS.
13 I am also a formerly battered woman. When I was running from
14 my abuser I stayed in two different shelters for battered
15 women in S. Carolina, a shelter in Orlando and finally, in
16 August of 1989, at CASA in St. Petersburg.

17 Q. PLEASE DESCRIBE THE MEMBERSHIP AND FUNCTION OF THE FCADV
18 WOMEN OF COLOR CAUCUS AND OF CASA.

1 A. The FCADV is an alliance of 29 programs for battered
2 women, concerned citizens and other groups working to end
3 domestic violence in Florida. The Women of Color Caucus of
4 FCADV represents issues around domestic violence specifically
5 affecting women of color. CASA is a program for survivors of
6 domestic violence which includes a shelter, outreach and
7 community education programs. CASA, a non-profit
8 organization, has served Pinellas County for 13 years.

9 Q. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR TESTIMONY TODAY?

10 A. I am testifying before the Commission in opposition to
11 Caller I.D. which, in the opinion of CASA and FCADV, will
12 negatively affect the safety of battered women, their children
13 and other individuals who work on their behalf.

14 Q. WHAT IS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF CALLER I.D.?

15 A. Caller I.D. is a service Southern Bell wishes to
16 introduce to Florida which allows the recipient of a phone
17 call the ability to view the phone number of in-coming
18 callers. The user must purchase a device to view the number
19 and pay a monthly fee to Southern Bell for the service.

20 Q. WHAT IS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF CALL BLOCK?

21 A. There are apparently two types of call block services:
22 per-call block and line block. Per-call block gives the
23 dialing party the ability to enter a code before initiating

1 a call. The code is supposed to prevent the originating
2 number from being registered on a Caller I.D. box. Line block
3 accomplishes the same purpose, but blocks every call dialed
4 on a particular line (as opposed to having to enter a code
5 before each call).

6 Q. WHAT IS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF CALL TRACE?

7 A. Call Trace refers to the ability of the recipient of a
8 harassing or obscene phone call to transfer information about
9 incoming calls to the telephone company and then to a local
10 law enforcement agency. The person will not know the phone
11 number of the caller. This can be offered on a per-use basis
12 or through a monthly billing.

13 Q. WHAT EFFECT WOULD CALLER I.D. HAVE ON BATTERED WOMEN AND
14 THEIR CHILDREN?

15 A. As a formerly battered woman, Caller I.D. would have been
16 very dangerous to me when I was running from my abuser. My
17 abuser hit me with a hammer ten times in the head. I received
18 ten wounds which were closed with 25 stitches for each wound.
19 When my abuser left, he thought I was dead. I managed to get
20 to my neighbor's house who called for an ambulance. After I
21 left the hospital, I was taken to a shelter with my three
22 children. My abuser went directly to my relatives to try to
23 find me when he heard I was not dead. Had Caller I.D. been
24 in place, he would have known where I was. (The shelter did

1 not permit personal calls, so I called from a friend's house.)
2 I did not even want him to know I was in the same small town
3 where we lived. Had I had Call Block on my telephone, I
4 believe I would have been unable to use the 911 service which
5 saved my life several times when I dialed and left the phone
6 off the hook.

7 Had my family had Caller I.D. when my abuser called me,
8 some members of my family might have attempted to rectify the
9 abuse and acted as vigilantes. I would prefer that the police
10 remain responsible for apprehending abusers.

11 Some of my children are very small and stay at home with
12 a baby sitter. My youngest child was permitted to call her
13 father, my abuser. As she was young, my fear would always
14 have been that just once she would not remember to use the
15 code and he would be at my house waiting for me when I came
16 home and, this time, I would die.

17 As a single parent, I cannot afford to pay a monthly fee
18 for my own privacy and I do not believe I should be forced to
19 tell my story over and over again every time I move in order
20 for Southern Bell to give me a waiver. Nor should I be forced
21 to contact a shelter to be "certified" as a battered woman or
22 some other such indignity, if I decide to move to another
23 community. I live with the fear that my abuser will find me
24 every day of my life. I do not need a reminder from Southern
25 Bell. How long would it take for me to become a "certified
26 battered woman" from a shelter and how long would it take for

1 Southern Bell to install a per-call block? It only took a few
2 minutes for my abuser to nearly kill me.

3 Q. WHAT EFFECT WOULD CALLER I.D. HAVE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
4 PROGRAMS AND STAFF?

5 A. Each shelter is staffed by paid and volunteer advocates
6 and administrators. Most of us carry beepers and respond from
7 homes of friends, family and other agencies that would not be
8 protected. If staff returned messages left by battered women
9 trying to escape, Caller I.D. could endanger many innocent
10 people.

11 Q. WHAT EFFECTS DO YOU BELIEVE CALL BLOCK WILL HAVE?

12 A. Southern Bell would offer Call Block for free only to
13 those who are first certified eligible. All others would have
14 to pay a fee for a calling card call or operator assisted call
15 to obtain per-call blocking. Women who enter shelters usually
16 are poor. The telephone provides a lifeline for women like
17 us. To force us to pay even more for our safety and our
18 privacy is ridiculous. If 911 services had been blocked for
19 me I would have died and I would live in fear that my child
20 would forget or be confused when to dial a special code.

21 I would never want to be "certified" as a battered woman
22 by a shelter and certainly not by Southern Bell. At least 50%
23 of all women will be abused by their intimate partner once in
24 a lifetime. The criteria proposed by Southern Bell would only

1 benefit a minority of women who can get into a crowded
2 shelter. Who would decide whether I would qualify for a call
3 block? Just how tragic does my situation need to be?

4 Q. WHAT MIGHT BE THE EFFECTS OF CALL TRACE ON BATTERED WOMEN
5 AND THEIR CHILDREN?

6 A. Call Trace appears to be an appropriate method of
7 handling obscene or harassing phone calls. For instance,
8 battered women could use Call Trace to inform police of calls
9 from their abusers. Courts would also welcome this
10 documentation for abusers with injunctions for protection
11 which order no contact including phone harassment. Call Trace
12 should be offered on a per call basis for everyone rather than
13 as a special service for those who can afford to pay.

14 Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY CLOSING COMMENTS?

15 A. Yes. CASA, the FCADV Women of Color Task Force and I
16 personally are opposed to Caller I.D. as it appears to present
17 danger to battered women and our children. Many of us have
18 called for help from programs but many more of us have not.
19 We all could suffer serious injuries because we could not
20 afford to pay for a block service or because we depend on a
21 complicated per-call block service. However, Call Trace, paid
22 for on a per-call basis, could be a welcomed service to us.
23 My life is just a little more important than to continue to
24 line the pockets of Southern Bell!

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE
Docket No. 891194-TI

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a copy of the foregoing has been furnished by U.S. Mail or hand-delivery to the following parties this 2nd day of October, 1990.

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