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MAIL ROOM

Study on Fair Rates (No. 980000A-SP)
Division of Records and Reporting
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850

Dear Study:

I don't have much of a problem with my phone rates as far as that goes. I think the plan I have chosen is fair, and probably a better deal for me than I had 10 or 20 years ago. However, there are a few things that now appear on my phone bill that are disturbing. Maybe in the past they weren't there, so I didn't question them. But they are on my bill, I pay them, and frankly, I don't know why I do pay them. Let me list them for you:

- A Discretionary Tax - while only \$.08 per month, I thought the word "discretionary" means - exercisable at or left to discretion To me, it means that someone says, yep, it's optional and we'll exercise the option. My question is who exercises this discretion? The Federal and State taxes are paid, does the carrier exercise the discretion?
- FCC Access Charge - I don't think the FCC owns any phone lines, so why do I pay the Federal Communications Commission an access fee? What service is provided by the FCC?
- Gross Receipts Tax - Other - Well, the Federals and State gets their taxes in separate categories, and I don't mind paying a county 911 service charge. But I am really curious what a gross receipts tax - other, really is, and who gets it?
- Franchise Tax - If Sprint and ATT, my servers, are franchises, how are they empowered to tax me? If someone else is exercising the franchise tax, who is it?

These items on my phone bills are inexplicable, and deserve an explanation. Don't feel put upon, my power bills are similar. There are lots of little charges with titles that don't mean anything that are on both bills. I blithely pay the bills because I need power and the phone. But I think that a full explanation of any and all charges, to include in plain English what they are for, who levies them, and who regulates them is in order. If I could attend one of your meetings, I would ask this in person.

At a minimum, I think you should require the carriers to explain their charges, and not just sluff it off on terms like "gross receipts taxes, other", or "discretionary tax". Most of us citizens don't have the time to research these terms, or where they came from, or who benefits from their income.

Sincerely,



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