

**Separate Statement of
Commissioner Michael Copps**

Re: Application by Verizon New York, Inc., Verizon Long Distance, Verizon Enterprise Solutions, Verizon Global Networks, Inc., and Verizon Select Services Inc., for Authorization to Provide In-Region InterLATA Services in Connecticut (CC Docket No. 01-100)

With today's grant of Verizon's application to provide long-distance services, consumers in Connecticut will now benefit from the expanded competition envisioned by the Telecommunications Act of 1996. The core of the congressional framework to promote competition in all telecommunications markets is the requirement that Bell companies open their local markets as a condition for entering the long-distance market.

With six applications granted by this Commission, we can see the wisdom of Congress' "carrot and stick" approach. There is ample evidence that when barriers are eliminated, competitors will enter a market. Congress' plan is a win-win for Bell companies and competitors alike. But even more importantly, it is a win for consumers who are the true beneficiaries of competition, enjoying greater choice, better services, and lower prices.

We must be ever mindful, however, that although the conditions for competition exist in Connecticut today, the grant of an application is not the end of the road. Our expectation is that Bell companies and competitors will work cooperatively through their business-to-business relationships to resolve any issues that develop. To the extent that backsliding occurs, this Commission and our state colleagues have a shared obligation to address any problems.

We also must not ignore our duty to ensure that independent incumbent carriers meet their statutory market-opening responsibilities, notwithstanding that they need not seek authorization prior to providing long-distance services. Verizon's territory includes only two percent of Connecticut consumers. Other Connecticut consumers are entitled to reap the same benefits of competition that their neighbors enjoy.

I take these enforcement duties with the utmost seriousness. Only with continued vigilance can we ensure that enduring competition thrives, that Congress' vision of competitive and deregulated telecommunications markets is realized, and that the public interest is thereby served.