



# NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.  
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

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## FCC COMMISSIONER COPPS CALLS FOR NEW CONSUMER INITIATIVES FOR TELEPHONE BILLS, WIRELESS SERVICE, AND CABLE RATES

Commissioner Michael Copps today called for an “always-on campaign for consumers” in a speech at the Consumer Federation of America’s 37<sup>th</sup> annual Consumer Assembly. Copps stated: “Our Commission does not always put consumers first. Sometimes we create the perception that we are perhaps more interested in protecting companies. I believe it is time to declare at the FCC an ‘always-on’ and always aggressive campaign for consumers.” Copps called for the following specific actions:

- Protect consumers from false and confusing line items: “Some carriers may use confusing and unexpected line items as a smokescreen to increase rates.” Copps called for an investigation into whether carriers are overcharging consumers through confusing line items on their bills, or are falsely labeling their internal costs as mandatory government fees.
- Make phone rates transparent and comparable: “At the bank we can compare interest rates. At the grocery store, we can count calories or carbohydrates by comparing nutrition labels. Wouldn’t it be helpful if we could compare telephone services by looking at a per-minute rate that includes every charge on the bill, including the baffling line items?” Copps called on the Commission to take truth-in-billing reform seriously.
- Reverse the decision to excuse wireless carriers from giving service maps to consumers: “Did you know that the FCC recently told wireless carriers they don’t have to provide consumers with service maps anymore? And even if you get a map it’s likely to be imprecise and won’t reveal where dead zones are. The FCC should reverse its anti-consumer decision and reestablish a requirement that carriers must make maps of their service areas available at a level of detail that allows consumers to know whether their homes or offices have service.”
- Give wireless consumers the power to comparison shop: “If I’m shopping for a cell phone, I want to know which carrier has the most complaints about dropped calls, dead zones and poor voice quality, but today it’s nearly impossible to get this information. We should standardize our consumer complaint process so that a consumer can see on the FCC web site who’s the best and who’s the worst in their city so he or she can make a smart purchase.”
- Fight spiraling cable rates: “Cable rates are soaring. What should we do? First we need to understand how media consolidation raises rates when we review mergers. Second we need to get serious about the reports Congress instructed us to conduct, and we need to take our findings and turn them into action at the Commission, or if more authority is needed, recommendations to Congress that would promote competition for the benefit of consumers.”