

Media Contact:

Will Wiquist, (202) 418-0509
will.wiquist@fcc.gov

For Immediate Release

**FCC FINES COMPANY \$1 MILLION FOR ILLEGALLY SWITCHING
CONSUMERS' LONG DISTANCE CARRIERS**

WASHINGTON, April 25, 2017 – The Federal Communications Commission today announced a \$1 million fine against a Florida-based long distance carrier, Advantage Telecommunications, for “slamming” and “cramming.” The company’s telemarketers violated Commission rules by impersonating representatives of customers’ existing long-distance providers and switching the customers’ long-distance carriers without obtaining proper, verified authorization – called slamming. Advantage also added unauthorized charges onto consumers’ telephone bills – often referred to as cramming. In addition, the company violated the Commission’s truth-in-billing rules by failing to plainly and clearly describe its charges on bills. The vast majority of consumers impacted were small businesses.

The Commission obtained more than 150 complaints against Advantage, receiving complaints from consumers, other agencies, and the Better Business Bureau. Small businesses, along with several individuals, reported that Advantage’s telemarketers impersonated employees of their existing long distance providers. They only learned that their long distance service had been switched after receiving their telephone bills.

Commission rules prohibit a carrier from switching a consumer’s chosen long distance provider without obtaining properly-verified authorization or adding unauthorized charges onto a consumer’s telephone bill. These practices, known as “slamming” and “cramming,” are unjust and unreasonable practices under the Communications Act.

For more information about the FCC’s rules protecting consumers from unauthorized charges on telephone bills, see the FCC consumer guides regarding [cramming](#) and [slamming](#).

Action by the Commission April 24, 2017 by Order (FCC 17-50). Chairman Pai and Commissioner Clyburn approving. Commissioner O’Rielly concurring in part and dissenting in part.

A copy of today’s Forfeiture Order is available at https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-17-50A1.pdf.

A copy of the Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture is available at https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-13-68A1.pdf.

###

Office of Media Relations: (202) 418-0500

TTY: (888) 835-5322

Twitter: @FCC

www.fcc.gov/office-media-relations

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).