

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MIGNON L. CLYBURN**

Re: Empowering Consumers to Prevent and Detect Billing for Unauthorized Charges, CG Docket No. 11-116.

Cramming for wireline customers continues to be a problem, so I am pleased that we are moving forward with some very basic consumer protections. The action we take today builds upon the significant work of the Senate Commerce Committee in its investigation on cramming. While some carriers recently announced that they are discontinuing certain third party billing services, the rules we adopt will give the customers of those carriers that continue to offer third-party billing of non-telecom services better tools than they currently have today.

First, the education of consumers through carrier disclosures will help wireline consumers take advantage of the blocking that's already available from providers. It may also have the added benefit of educating consumers that third-party charges may appear on their bills, so they can be on the look out for such charges. Second, the requirement that wireline carriers separate third-party charges on their bills for non-telecom services will help consumers spot cramming. This will allow the industry to be more responsive to consumers who discover unauthorized charges on their bills. Those disputes can then be resolved more quickly, and consumers can avoid paying for services or goods they did not order.

Our action today is just an initial step, in that we will continue to evaluate other measures that could protect consumers, such as a requirement that consumers opt-in to third-party charges. In addition, we are seeking comment on the rising level of wireless cramming complaints. The number of CMRS complaints almost doubled last year at the FCC, and several states are investigating wireless cramming. As is well known, most Americans are wireless customers, and for those who are low-income, cramming can be especially harmful. Thus, it is my hope that commenters will address these issues in the Further Notice. I thank the Chairman and Commissioner McDowell for accommodating my request to seek further comment about cramming in the CMRS industry. I wish to also thank the Bureau staff for its diligent work in this proceeding. I look forward to the next steps in further ensuring that all consumers are protected from unauthorized third-party charges on their telephone bills.