

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

Re: *In the Matter of Tele Circuit Network Corporation*, Forfeiture Order, File No. EB-TCD-17-00023953

In the Telecommunications Act, Congress recognized the importance of protecting consumers from unscrupulous practices such as “slamming” by specifically charging the Commission with adopting rules to prevent unauthorized carrier changes—which often, in turn, enable other harmful practices such as “cramming.” With this Order, we take aggressive steps to crack down on these practices that can harm consumers not just financially but can also leave them vulnerable and thus susceptible to further harms.

In this case, Tele Circuit used the reputation of well-known carriers to gain the trust of elderly consumers, a particularly vulnerable population. The company in some instances cut off their victims’ telephone service due to unpaid bills, leaving them without the ability to communicate with family or reach support services for extended periods of time, and refused to reinstate service until the crammed charges were paid in full. While even one instance would be intolerable, the repeated nature of Tele Circuit’s predatory behavior makes its actions particularly egregious, and the consumer complaints show the great extent of the impact felt by these unsuspecting individuals. We owe it to American consumers to protect them against such unscrupulous bad actors.

I strongly support the action we are taking here, and thank the Bureau for their continuing efforts to enforce the regulations we have in place to protect consumers from these and other harmful practices.