



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 170**

*January Session, 2001*

Substitute House Bill No. 6683

*House of Representatives, April 9, 2001*

The Committee on Energy and Technology reported through REP. GIANNAROS of the 21st Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

## ***AN ACT CONCERNING RIGHTS OF CONSUMERS IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS TRANSACTIONS.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 16-256j of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof:

3 All bills for telecommunications services, whether issued by a  
4 telecommunications company, including, but not limited to, a certified  
5 telecommunications provider or by a billing service, shall (1) contain  
6 the name of each carrier providing service as well as a toll-free number  
7 for customer complaints for each such carrier printed clearly and  
8 conspicuously on the portion of the bill relating to each carrier; (2)  
9 clearly disclose the amount that must be paid to avoid disconnection of  
10 basic, local service and the specific services for which failure to pay  
11 may result in the disconnection of basic, local service; (3) clearly  
12 disclose whether the removal or change in a service will result in the

13 loss of a discount or other change in the rate charge for any other  
14 service subscribed to or used by the customer; (4) for any promotional  
15 offering filed with the Department of Public Utility Control on or after  
16 October 1, 2001, pursuant to subsection (e) of section 16-247f, clearly  
17 disclose that the offering is a promotion and will be in effect for a  
18 limited period of time; and (5) only label a charge as a tax if such tax is  
19 directly assessed by the taxing entity on the customer through the  
20 telecommunications company, which tax shall appear as a separate  
21 charge on such bill.

22       Sec. 2. (NEW) The Department of Public Utility Control shall initiate  
23 a contested proceeding pursuant to chapter 54 of the general statutes  
24 to investigate whether and under what circumstances a  
25 telecommunications company that is subject to the jurisdiction of the  
26 department, shall be required to provide advance notice to customers  
27 of telecommunications services of any change in the services  
28 purchased by a customer or to which a customer subscribes that  
29 results in an increase in such customer's overall monthly bill.

**ET           JOINT FAVORABLE SUBST.**

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

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**OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:** None

**Affected Agencies:** Department of Public Utility Control

**Municipal Impact:** None

**Explanation**

**State Impact:**

The bill expands the types of information that must be included on telecommunications service bills which has no state fiscal impact. Additionally, the bill requires the Department of Public Utility Control (DPUC) to conduct a contested case to investigate whether and under what circumstances DPUC regulated telecommunications companies should be required to provide advanced notice to their customers of any charge that will increase their bills. It is anticipated that the DPUC can conduct this contested case within the normal budgetary resources of the agency, thus there is no fiscal impact.

**OLR Bill Analysis**

sHB 6683

**AN ACT CONCERNING RIGHTS OF CONSUMERS IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS TRANSACTIONS.****SUMMARY:**

This bill expands the types of information that must be included on telecommunications services bills. It also requires the Department of Public Utility Control (DPUC) to investigate whether and under what circumstances DPUC-regulated telecommunications companies should be required to provide advance notice to their customers of changes that will increase their bills. DPUC must conduct its investigation as a contested case. Among other things, this means that the Office of Consumer Counsel is entitled to participate in the case as a party, and DPUC must abide by the provisions of the Uniform Administrative Procedure Act regarding *ex parte* communications.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2001

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS BILLS**

The bill requires each telecommunications bill to clearly disclose:

1. the amount that must be paid to avoid disconnection of basic local service and the specific services for which failure to pay may result in such disconnection (federal law (47 CFR § 64.2401) imposes a similar requirement);
2. whether the removal or change in a service will result in the loss of a discount or other change in the rate charged for any other service the customer subscribes to or uses; and
3. for any promotional offering filed with DPUC after September 30, 2001, that the offering is promotional and will last for a limited time.

Under the bill, telecommunications bills can only label a charge as a tax if it is directly assessed on the customer through the telecommunications company. Such taxes must appear as a separate charge on the bill.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Energy and Technology Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 13    Nay 0