

By Senator Siplin

19-949-04

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to Lifeline telecommunications
3 service; amending s. 364.10, F.S.; directing
4 local exchange telecommunications companies to
5 notify company customers of the Lifeline
6 service and the eligibility criteria for
7 Lifeline participation; requiring the company
8 to send brochures, pamphlets, or other
9 materials to the customers at least once each
10 year in the customer's monthly billing
11 envelope; providing an effective date.

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13 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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15 Section 1. Subsection (3) of section 364.10, Florida
16 Statutes, is amended to read:

17 364.10 Undue advantage to person or locality
18 prohibited; Lifeline service.--

19 (3)(a) Effective September 1, 2003, any local exchange
20 telecommunications company authorized by the commission to
21 reduce its switched network access rate under ~~pursuant to~~ s.
22 364.164 shall have tariffed and shall provide Lifeline service
23 to any otherwise eligible customer or potential customer who
24 meets an income eligibility test at 125 percent or less of the
25 federal poverty income guidelines for Lifeline customers.
26 However, the company shall provide Lifeline service to a
27 person 65 years of age or older if the person meets an income
28 eligibility test at 175 percent or less of the Federal poverty
29 income guidelines. The ~~Such~~ a test for eligibility must
30 augment, rather than replace, the eligibility standards
31 established by federal law and based on participation in

1 certain low-income assistance programs. Each intrastate
2 interexchange telecommunications company shall, effective
3 September 1, 2003, file a tariff providing at a minimum the
4 intrastate interexchange telecommunications carrier's current
5 Lifeline benefits and exemptions to Lifeline customers who
6 meet the income eligibility test set forth in this subsection.
7 The Office of Public Counsel shall certify and maintain claims
8 submitted by a customer for eligibility under the income test
9 authorized by this subsection.

10 (b) Each local exchange telecommunications company
11 subject to this subsection shall provide to each state and
12 federal agency providing benefits to persons eligible for
13 Lifeline service applications, brochures, pamphlets, or other
14 materials that inform the ~~such~~ persons of their eligibility
15 for Lifeline, and each state agency providing the ~~such~~
16 benefits shall furnish the materials to affected persons at
17 the time they apply for benefits.

18 (c) Each local exchange telecommunications company
19 subject to this subsection shall notify the company's
20 customers of the Lifeline service and the eligibility criteria
21 for Lifeline participation. At least once each year, the
22 company must include in the customer's monthly billing
23 envelope the Lifeline brochures, pamphlets, or other materials
24 promoting participation in the program.

25 (d)~~(e)~~ Any local exchange telecommunications company
26 customer receiving Lifeline benefits shall not be subject to
27 any residential basic local telecommunications service rate
28 increases authorized by s. 364.164 until the local exchange
29 telecommunications company reaches parity as defined in s.
30 364.164(5) or until the customer no longer qualifies for the
31 Lifeline benefits established by this section or s. 364.105,

1 or unless otherwise determined by the commission upon petition
2 by a local exchange telecommunications company.

3 (e)~~(d)~~ By December 31, 2003, each state agency that
4 provides benefits to persons eligible for Lifeline service
5 shall undertake, in cooperation with the Department of
6 Children and Family Services, the commission, and
7 telecommunications companies providing Lifeline services, the
8 development of procedures to promote Lifeline participation.

9 (f)~~(e)~~ The commission shall report to the Governor,
10 the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of
11 Representatives by December 31 each year on the number of
12 customers who are subscribing to Lifeline service and the
13 effectiveness of any procedures to promote participation.

14 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2004.

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SENATE SUMMARY

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Directs local exchange telecommunications companies to
notify company customers of the Lifeline service and the
eligibility criteria for Lifeline participation. Requires
companies to send brochures, pamphlets, or other
materials to the customers at least once each year in the
customer's monthly billing envelope.