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August 27, 1998

FPSC
Study on Fair Rates (No. 980000A-SP)
Division of Records and Reporting
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee FL 32399-0850

Gentlemen:

Along with my most recent telephone bill, I received a notice of the Study; since I cannot attend any of the hearings, I am submitting my opinion of phone service affordability in writing.

I would like to take exception to the "Garbage Fees" that appear on my telephone bill every month, particularly these two:

- the fee for unpublished numbers - about a dollar a month. Why should I pay them not to receive a service I don't want - a listing in the telephone book - and get listed if I don't pay? The history of this charge shows that the phone companies, in their early days, published directories at their own expense as an inducement to the majority who were not "on the telephone" to sign up.

Now this ancient marketing ploy has become just a racket to charge people for services they do not want. It costs them nothing not to publish directories and substantial amounts to publish them, charging their customers at the same time for exclusion. This racket must be stopped. Note that Yellow Pages customers must pay for listings.

They will almost certainly complain that it will cause them to change their procedures at great expense, along with other excuses. Nobody will believe this in an age when one keystroke on the computer can accomplish any number of alternatives. When people sign up for service, they should be asked if they want their names in directories and receive a discount if so, since directories are a profitable unregulated advertising business for the phone company.

the fee for tone dialing (so-called Touch Tone) - about a dollar a month. Touted as the very next thing to a miracle when it appeared thirty years ago, it is now an integral part of the electronics of every telephone exchange.

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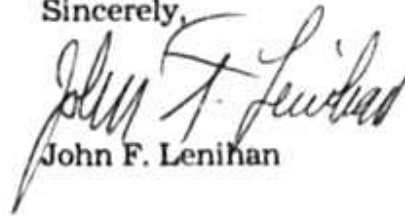
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In fact, although the equipment can handle the older form of pulse dialing, tone signaling is the basis of all the systems. It is now almost impossible to purchase telephone sets with dials. Paying extra for this service is just another example of a racket left over from the earlier "Ma Bell" days of the telephone business.

I urge the PSC to strongly oppose these "Garbage Fees" that add no value to telephone service, and include that opposition in the Study to be sent to the Legislature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John F. Lenihan".

John F. Lenihan