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Nourishing The Human Spirit.

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Ms. Renee Jenkins
Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
Docketing Division
180 East Broad Street
Columbus, OH 43215

PUCO

Re: Case No. 02-3069-TP-ALT

Dear Ms. Jenkins:

I am writing this letter in support of allowing AT&T's Lifeline Ohio customers to be given the choice of selecting vertical features. Customers who qualify for the discounted service offered by Lifeline Ohio are currently prevented from purchasing features such as Caller ID and 3-Way Calling. Thus, individuals and families who would benefit from this program find the current rules restrictive and choose not to enroll.

Potential participants for the Lifeline Ohio program are encouraged to sign up for this program due to the assistance AT&T can give to low-income individuals and families. However, the restrictive rules in place put the enrollee in the situation of either justifying their personal medical issues, safety issues, or risk feeling their choices are dishonest when signing their declaration. In many situations, those qualifying individuals turn down this much needed program rather than lose their ability to choose.

The current rules only consider medical and safety issues as eligibility to maintain features. However, these rules do not consider a person's right to choice when looking at telephone options, enrollment becomes antagonistic to those who wish to utilize certain features, and indeed forces an individual or family to identify medical concerns to a third party. There are a number of reasons enrollees request features such as Caller ID and 3-Way Calling. It should not be up to a third party to determine whether their desire for these features is necessary or luxury as every person's situation is unique.

Elimination of these restrictions, in my opinion, would increase Lifeline Ohio enrollment to qualified participants. As a Director in a non-profit organization, we find numerous restrictions in funding for services. A basic service such as telephone service –and the right to choose features based on individual needs – should not fall into the same category. Please support AT&T's request to allow affordable telecom services to those that need it by simplifying the rules for enrollment and by not allowing a government agency to regulate and monitor their personal choices for telephone services or the amount they spend on those services. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Toni T. Dodge

Toni T. Dodge

Director, Help-at-Home and Customer Service

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