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Committees:
Ranking Member – Education
Health, Human Services and Medicaid
Local Government, Public Safety and
Veterans Affairs
Public Utilities
Finance
Subcommittee:
Vice Chair –Finance Primary and
Secondary Education

Vernon Sykes, Ph.D.
State Senator
28th District

August 31, 2018

Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
180 E. Broad Street
Columbus Ohio 43215

RE: Case no. 17-1948-TP-UNC

Dear Commissioners,

In 2018, having access to a phone is a necessity, not a luxury. AT&T provides access to basic phone services to almost 8,000 Ohioans through Lifeline. Reliable, timely communication is critical to modern society's function.

If the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio allows AT&T to dissolve their relationship with Lifeline, thousands of low-income Ohioans may lose access to their only means of communication. The argument that consumers can just switch to another phone company is disingenuous because some rural areas lack access to reliable and affordable alternatives. Further, the Federal Communication Commission is considering ending the Lifeline program with non-facilities based wireless providers, which would likely reduce the number of alternative Lifeline providers. The dissolution of AT&T Lifeline program will eliminate Ohioans' ability to participate in today's fast-paced world. It will eliminate their ability to receive timely medical care and emergency services, and engage their local job markets.

I strongly urge the PUCO to oppose AT&T attempt to drop out of the vital Lifeline program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Vernon Sykes", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Senator Vernon Sykes
28th Senate District

This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities

Commission of Ohio Docketing Information System on

8/31/2018 3:16:37 PM

in

Case No(s). 17-1948-TP-UNC

Summary: Correspondence electronically filed by Docketing Staff on behalf of Docketing.