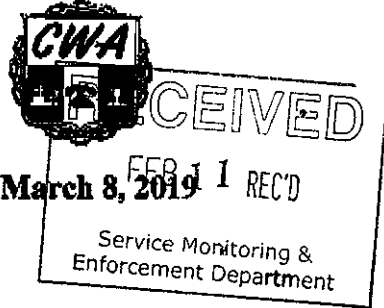


Communications
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FILE



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PUCO

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO
180 EAST BROAD STREET
COLUMBUS, OH 43215

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF)
AT&T OHIO SEEKING TO RELINQUISH)
ITS ELIGIBLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS) Case No. 17-1948-TP-UNC
CARRIER DESIGNATION IN A PORTION)
OF ITS SERVICE TERRITORY)

**COMMENTS OF THE COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA D4
IN RESPONSE TO THE COMMISSION STAFF REPORT FEBRUARY 9, 2019.**

The Communications Workers of America is opposed to the Commissioner's adopting the Staff report dated February 9, 2019. After the thousands of opposition emails and statements that are on record in the public comments section of this case, for the PUCO Staff to make the recommendation to approve the request of AT&T shows little concern for the effects this request would have on the poor and elderly in rural Ohio.

AT&T's petition fails miserably to make a valid argument to allow them to ABANDON loyal low income customers, many of them poor, elderly, and on fixed incomes, who, quite simply, have no desire for wireless phones. To say many of the areas are "covered by wireless" is misleading. What's your definition of "covered"? One bar, two bars, three bars, four bars, five bars?

Fact of the matter is, AT&T wants out of an obligation that they readily agreed to when they were getting the many rate cases and telecom deregulation bills passed in the State Legislature over the last few decades.

The FCC is now looking to determine if most of these wireless carriers, being touted as replacements, can even offer Lifeline. Why make a ruling that includes a solution that may be overturned?

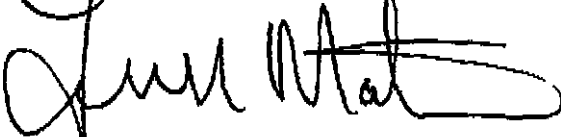
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We ask that you deny AT&T's request, or, at a minimum, hold this case in abeyance until the FCC makes its ruling. To grant AT&T's request now has no consideration for Ohio's poor and elderly and only caters to AT&T's desire to absolve itself of any regulation.

Shouldn't any good decision benefit both the customer and the provider?

Why is the burden of proof being put on the customer to prove they don't have reliable service under a new provider when they were happy with an AT&T landline? This process could cause Ohio's poor and elderly customers a nightmare scenario of being forced to switch providers, having inadequate service with a new provider, starting the formal process to return to AT&T, and then deal with AT&T to get service back. Imagine your grandparent or an elderly person you know facing this challenge!

This case has been around since 2017; what is the problem with holding it in abeyance until the FCC rules? Why disrupt the safety services of Ohio's elderly and poor if it isn't needed?



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