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FILE

July 31, 2001

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Docketing Division  
PUCO  
180 East Broad Street—10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-3793

Re: Case Nos. 00-1532-TP-COI, 99-998-TP-COI, and 99-563-TP-COI

To Docketing:

Enclosed are an Original and one copy of the Transcript of Public Hearing held in Cleveland on July 13, 2001, concerning the above-referenced cases.

Please file the Transcript in these two proceedings (i.e. Case No. 00-1532-TP-COI; and Case Nos. 99-563-TP-COI and 99-998-TP-COI.)

Also I have enclosed a cover sheet of the transcript. Please return the cover sheet, time-stamped, in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation.

Sincerely,

*William M. Ondrey Gruber*  
William M. Ondrey Gruber

On Behalf of Cleveland City Council

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**City of Cleveland**  
Legislative Department

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**IN THE CITY OF CLEVELAND  
CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO**

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES  
COMMISSION OF OHIO

PUBLIC HEARING -  
CASE NO: 00-1532-TP-COI

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**RE: PROPOSED TELEPHONE ELECTIVE ALTERNATIVE REGULATION PLAN**

**Public Meeting**

Transcript of Public Meeting that was held at the Madonna Hall,  
before Presiding Officer, Mr. William M. Ondrey-Gruber, at 1906 East  
82<sup>nd</sup> Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44103, on Friday, July 13, 2001 at  
6:00 o'clock p.m.

**SPONSORED BY:** Councilwoman Fannie M. Lewis, Ward 7

**CO. SPONSORED BY:**

Councilman Patricia Britt  
Councilman Joseph Cimperman  
Councilman Frank Jackson  
Councilman Bill W. Patmon  
Councilman Craig Willis

Donna S. Smith,  
Court Reporter

**ATTENDANCE:****(On Behalf of Cleveland City Council)**

Mr. William M. Ondrey-Gruber  
Attorney at Law, City Hall  
City Council, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Room No. 220  
Cleveland, Ohio 44114  
(216) 664-6437

**(On Behalf of SBC/Ameritech)**

Mr. Charles Patton, Director  
External Affairs Department-SBC/Ameritech  
45 Erieview Plaza, Suite No. 1490  
Cleveland, Ohio 44114  
(216) 822-7283

**(On Behalf of the Ohio Office of the Consumers Counsel)**

Mr. Joseph Serio  
Attorney at Law  
Ohio Office of the Consumers Counsel  
10 West Broad Street, Suite No. 1800  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-3485  
(614) 466-8574

**Also Present**

(On Behalf of the USA Advisory Committee to Ameritech)

Mr. Joseph P. Meissner, Chairman  
Attorney at Law  
Urban Development Section-  
Legal Aid Society of Cleveland  
1223 West 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Cleveland, Ohio 44113  
(216) 687-1900

**Representatives of City Council:**

Councilwoman Fannie M. Lewis, Ward 7  
Councilman Bill W. Patmon, Ward 8  
Councilman Joseph T. Jones, Ward 1

# PRESENTATION OF SPEAKERS

<u>SPEAKERS</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
OPENING STATEMENT BY PRESIDING OFFICER WILLIAM M. ONDREY-GRUBER.....	5
COUNCILWOMAN FANNIE LEWIS.....	15
PUBLIC AUDIENCE SWORN IN.....	17
MR. JOSEPH MEISSNER, ESQ. CHAIRMAN, USA ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO AMERITECH.....	18
COUNCILMAN BILL W. PATMON, WARD 8.....	25
COUNCILMAN JOSEPH T. JONES, WARD 1.....	27
COUNCILWOMAN FANNIE LEWIS, WARD 7.....	34
MISS NATASHA JONES YOUTH WORKER.....	37
MS. MARGARET SHIRRELS YOUTH WORKER.....	38
MS. ROSA-LINDA DEMORE FACILITATOR, HOUGH COMMUNITY COUNCIL.....	39
MR. TIM WALTERS, REPRESENTATIVE CONSUMERS FOR FAIR UTILITY RATES.....	41
MR. SHAWN HILLIARD.....	45
MRS. JACQUELINE D. PERRIES, REPRESENTATIVE FAIRFAX BUSINESS ASSOCIATION.....	48
MS. SHIRLEY SMITH.....	49
MR. FRANK REID.....	51
MR. ELWOOD CLARK.....	52



**Cont'd. to Presentation of Speakers:**

MRS. ROSALIE GARNER WARD 7, PRECINCT COMMITTEE MEMBER.....	55
BISHOP JOHN L. HILTON PASTOR, FAITH TEMPLE CHURCH OF GOD.....	57
MS. SABERNA PITEL.....	59
MR. CHARLIE DEMORE, SR. PRESIDENT, WARD 7.....	61
MRS. GEORGIA BRANTZ VICE PRESIDING, WARD 7.....	62
MR. WILLIE STARK.....	64
MS. CORINNE WILSON.....	65
MS. JEAN HOGAN PRESIDENT, EUCLID AVENUE STREET CLUB.....	69
MS. FLOSSIE WITSON SECRETARY, EUCLID AVENUE STREET CLUB.....	70
MS. CHARLOTTE TATE.....	71
MS. CAMILLE SMITH CITY OF CLEVELAND HOUSING INSPECTOR.....	72
MR. NORRIS MARTIN.....	73
MR. JIM LAWRENCE.....	74
MRS. CAROL LEE JONES.....	75
MS. ANNIE MOORE.....	76
MR. ABDUL SHAHEED COORDINATOR, HOUGH NEIGHBORHOOD OPPORTUNITY CENTER.....	77
MS. BARBARA STEWART.....	80
MS. BENITA CLEVELAND.....	83

**Cont'd. to Presentation of Speakers:**

MS. LIZ SMITH.....	84
MRS. MARILYNN McFARKAS.....	93
MRS. LINDA HIGHSMITH.....	99
MS. DOTTIE TURNER.....	100
MR. CHARLES PATTON, ESQ.....	102
MR. JOSEPH SERIO, ESQ.....	109
COUNCILWOMAN FANNIE LEWIS.....	112
REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE.....	122

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**PROCEEDINGS**  
---oOo---

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Good evening.

THE AUDIENCE: Good evening.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: I would like to call this public meeting to order. I need to enter some formal language on the record, which our Court Reporter is taking and that is the record. Then, we will proceed further with testimony.

We are here this evening on the matter of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio Ordered Investigation of an Elective Alternative Regulation Plan Framework for Incumbent. (That means the existing Local Exchange Companies). They have a Case number for that in a proceeding numbered, 00-1532. That is 1532-TP for telephone-COI for Commission Ordered Investigation.

In other words, this case is an investigation begun by the PUCO into whether the local telephone companies, like Ameritech, should be allowed to use an alternative form of regulation. An alternative from the way they are currently regulated by the Public Utilities Commission.

Thus, we are here to talk about telephone rules being composed by the Public Utilities Commission.

As I said earlier, my name is Bill Gruber and I am going to preside this evening on behalf of Cleveland City Council and our hostess, Councilwoman Lewis and the other Council Members who have joined her in sponsoring this meeting this evening. You will hear from some of those Council Members.

The telephone rules before the PUCO right now are a proposal of the PUCO's own internal staff, but the five Commissioners of the PUCO who make the decisions have not yet reached a decision on whether to approve the proposal or not or to change the proposal, which is another alternative.

As part of the process, the PUCO has taken formal comments from interested parties, as I have already shown you those that came from the consumer side, and there are many others from other telephone companies. The comments are legal documents that express the various parties' point of view on the proposed telephone rules.

The purpose of tonight's meeting is to provide an opportunity for the public to comment on the staff's proposed telephone rules. The Commission has already held seven formal hearings throughout the State over the past few weeks and months

in Dayton, Athens, Columbus, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Mansfield and Toledo.

At each of these hearings, the Commissioner presiding stressed the importance of hearing from consumers and getting their views on the proposed rules, and, certainly, we agree with that, because the telephone rules are only a staff proposal. The Commission has the option of accepting them, rejecting them or modifying them in part or entirely. That means re-writing them from scratch.

We invited the Public Utilities Commissioners, all five of them, to tonight's meeting, but we have not heard from them. I assume they are not here at present.

Since there is silence, I will take it as being that they are not here tonight.

In addition, Ameritech was informed and Ameritech does have a Representative, at least one Representative or more here tonight and they may speak also, if they wish to.

If there are any other representatives of the Public Utilities Commission's staff, the Commissioners, or any telephone companies present, I would like them to please identify themselves.

And, Mr. Patton, we would like to have you identify yourself for the record too.

MR. PATTON: I am Charles Patton. I am with the SBC Ameritech Office/External Affairs Department. For the record my address is 45 Erieview Plaza, Suite No. 1490, Cleveland, Ohio 44114.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: As you all have been told already and I will now put on the record, a transcript will be made of this hearing and will be delivered and filed officially with the Public Utilities Commission, just like the transcripts from the seven formal hearings and another hearing held by the Consumers Counsel in Akron. Those will all be filed with the Commission, along with this transcript.

We have already heard a little bit of the background right here from Attorney Joseph Meissner and from Attorney Joseph Serio from the Office of the Consumers Counsel. Are there any other Attorneys for any other parties here that are here in this proceeding?

(No response)

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: I will take the silence to mean that there are no other Attorneys here for the various parties or consumer groups.

Next, I am going to read a statement from the Public Utilities Commission's staff that they have read at every formal public hearing in order to explain their proposal.

This is the Statement that the Public Utilities Commission has read and this is from a transcript from one of the hearings.

"The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio is the regulatory agency charged with the responsibility of regulating the rates and services of public utilities operating in Ohio, such as gas, electric, water, sewer and telephone companies.

Our mission is to ensure all residential and business consumers access to adequate, safe and reliable utility services at fair prices while facilitating an environment that provides competitive choices.

Staff of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio has issued for public comment a proposal for an alternative regulation plan for local telephone companies. There is currently a parallel rule-making process underway before the Commission that involves the competitive local telephone rules.

It is these rules which make up the majority of the ways local telephone companies are regulated in the State of Ohio. The local competition rules are not the subject of today's public hearing.

Today, we are interested in your comments about the staff's alternative regulation proposal.

Currently, local telephone companies are subject to traditional rate base, rate-of-return regulation, unless they file for and gain Commission approval of an alternative form of regulation, such as price cap regulation or regulation that is free from earnings review.

Ameritech Ohio and the Cincinnati Bell Telephone Company are both presently regulated under company-designed alternative regulation plans.

Staff has proposed a generic plan. That is any local telephone company could select to opt into.

Every company that selects this plan would operate under the same guidelines. Regardless of whether a local telephone company is regulated under traditional rate-of-return regulation or under a company-designed alternative regulation plan or under the proposed elective alternative regulation plan, there are rules and safeguards in place to ensure that customers are provided with quality of service from their company.

The Commission has minimum service quality rules that all local telephone companies are required to follow and these requirements would not change under the staff's proposed rules.

Under the proposed alternative regulation plan, the company would not be subject to earnings review and would have



pricing flexibility for services other than basic local exchange service.

In exchange for this pricing flexibility and freedom from earnings review, a company adopting an elective alternative regulation plan would be required to fulfill a number of important commitments to benefit consumers. Company services are grouped into three categories under the staff proposal.

One of the commitments would require that companies under elective alternative regulation would not be allowed to increase their basic local telephone rates. So long as the company is under this plan, their basic local telephone rate will be capped at the rate that existed when it adopted the plan.

The telephone company would also be required to offer a flat rate residential calling package within a minimum local service area.

A second group of services would be capped for 36 months, beginning with the Commission's approval of a company's election of an alternative regulation plan.

Example of services in the second group include call trace, Caller ID with number, second and third basic local service line, non-published number and per-line identification blocking.

After three years, a company could price services within an approved range, capped at two times the initial rate for the service.

A third group of services would be capped for twelve months. Examples of services included in this third category are call waiting, call forwarding, and all toll services. Companies under elective alternative regulation would also be required to fulfill an advanced telecommunication services commitment.

Advanced telecommunications capability is the availability of high-speed broadband telecommunications that enables the use of high- quality data, graphics and video.

This advanced capability would allow for high-speed access to the Internet.

A company adopting a proposed plan would be required to deploy within twelve months advanced telecommunication services to any customers in all areas where access lines per square mile equal 300 or more lines and within 24 months in all areas where access lines per square mile equal 100 access lines or more.

No later than 24 four months from its adoption of the elective alternative regulation plan, the company would be required to submit to the PUCO its long-term plans for deploying advanced

telecommunication services to all remaining customers in its service area, regardless of where they live.

All companies under the proposed plan would be required to offer a Lifeline assistance program. Low-income customers would automatically qualify for this program if they are already receiving benefits from certain state or federal low-income programs or if their household income is at or below 150 percent of the poverty level.

The company would reduce the basic rate of basic local telephone service for the Lifeline customer. The basic lifeline service would include flat rate service and touch-tone service. A customer signing up for this service would not have to pay a deposit or installation charges. The customer would receive free toll, 900 or 976 blocking.

Once a company is under the elective alternative regulation plan, it will not be permitted to end its plan until it has completed all of its commitments.

Once completed, the company could choose to return to regular rate-base, rate-of-return regulation, a company-designed regulation plan, or continue to be regulated under the elective alternative regulation plan.

Staff's alternative regulation plan was issued on March 1st, 2001.

We, at the PUCO have received comments on the proposal from all of the organizations and companies that have an interest in the proposal.

We have also received comments from many different consumer groups, including the Ohio Consumers Counsel and AARP.

We are gaining an important perspective from the process of reviewing all of the different points of view, and, we, the Commission will be considering changes to the proposal to address the concerns expressed.

The staff and the Chairman of the Commission were at other public hearings, because they are interested in hearing your perspective. This is an important process.

The better we understand the public's perspective, the more effectively we can craft these rules. We are looking forward to hearing from you today."

And I am looking forward to it, but that is not my statement, but, again, the statement of the Public Utilities Commission staff and they will hear from you today, because the transcript will be sent to them.

I do not want to take any more time up. I would like for the Court Reporter to swear in any one who would like to speak

as a Sworn Statement. You can still speak as an un-Sworn Statement, if you are not sworn in.

I do not know if you want them to stand or can they just do it in their seats?

COURT REPORTER: It probably would be better if everybody will stand.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Okay. Everybody who wants to give a Sworn Statement, please stand up and the Court Reporter will swear you in. It will just take about a half a minute. Anybody who wants to speak or give a Sworn Statement, stand up. You can still speak on an un-Sworn Statement, if you want.

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: Can I say a few words before the swearing in process, Mr. Gruber?

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Yes, Mrs. Lewis.

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: I am saying this to the people of Ward 7.

All right. This hearing is about whether or not you want to have some say so over the increase on your telephone bill.

Now, if you do not know what to say, then just say, I object, as long as you get it on the record.

Now, I did not bring you out here this evening for you to just sit here and, then, you know, like, you do not know what is

going on, because when you see your telephone bills, then, you are going to call me.

(Laughter from the Audience)

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: Now, we have got the lawyers over here from Ameritech and we have our lawyer here from City Hall and we have two Councilmen here who is sponsoring this.

Now, I want to hear you all say something. If you do not know what to say, just say that we need help. Say something. Don't sit here and let the Councilmen -- because we can do the hollering Downtown. We do not have to come out here to holler. I called this meeting for you all. All right?

Now, how many of you all here want an increase in your telephone bill?

(Audience responding)

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: All right, then. So, you need stand up.

Now, if you want to testify, I want to see some folks to stand up. Because if you do not stand up, don't call me.

Okay. So, how many of you all want to testify?

(Audience Responding)

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Okay, now, if we could have silence in the room? You can stay standing for just a second.

Please raise your right hand and the Court Reporter will swear you in.

---o0o---

**(PUBLIC AUDIENCE SWORN IN)**

---o0o---

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Thank you.

Now, I am going to call each person who signed up first, and, then, we will proceed with anyone who has not signed up. That is fine, if you have not signed up yet. We will just try to go in order of where people are seated, before some people may have to leave.

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: Call the Council people first.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Right. I will get them first. So, I will do them first.

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: Okay.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: I would like for you to, please, when you speak, stand up. If you can, come to the front.

If not, stand by your seat or in the center aisle and speak very clearly and loudly, so the Court Reporter can get everything down, and, so that everyone here can hear you. State your name and where you live. You do not have to give your specific address, if you do not want to. You can just say what City you live in or what Ward, if you would like.

So, first, I would like for Joe Meissner, the Attorney for the Empowerment Center to continue his statement on the record, that he began off of the record.

Also, state if you were sworn in or not.

Mr. Meissner, go ahead.

---o0o---

**MR. JOSEPH P. MEISSNER, ESQ.**

being first duly sworn, further  
testified as follows:

---o0o---

**SWORN STATEMENT**

---o0o---

**BY MR. MEISSNER:**

My name is Joseph Meissner. I am the Chairman of the USA Advisory Committee to the Ameritech Telephone Company. I am not here in my capacity as a Chairman, but my testimony is based upon my experiences with the company.



I want to begin first with thanking the Ameritech Company for the program it now has. It is a good program. It needs a lot of improvements, but it is a good program. The program is summarized on the green sheets, which people received.

If you will look at the green sheet very briefly.

(Audience perusing over the document)

MR. MEISSNER: If you want to save \$125.00 a year on your telephone bill and get a monthly credit, you can sign up using this application sheet.

You must be somebody who is currently receiving and there are all of the programs listed; Food Stamps, HEAP, Support for your Energy, Ohio Works First, Federal Public Housing or Section 8, The Ohio Energy Credit Program, or Medicaid, or SSI, or Disability Assistance.

If you have any one of those programs, you qualify to sign up for the current Ameritech program. There are two parts to the Ameritech program.

On the green sheet, you see where the blocks are? The little blocks on the left side?

(Audience responding)

MR. MEISSNER: Yellow. Yellow blocks, then. The Army told me that I was color blind. They still took me, though.

(Laughter from the Audience)

MR. MEISSNAR: Yellow. I thought I had got it on green for money. Anyway, yellow. Yellow for hope. The first little yellow block says, "sign me up for USA Plan One." Optional features like call waiting are not available on this plan. Your monthly credit on your telephone bill would be \$10.20.

So, if you have just an ordinary phone with nothing like a call waiting or other feature, you get \$10.20 on your monthly bill of credit.

See, the second block. "It says sign me up for USA Plan Two. Optional features, like, call waiting, Caller ID, etc. are available.

Now, I have got to tell you what they are currently charging. But you would get a monthly credit on your telephone bill of \$6.30. It is still something. That is the program that we now have from Ameritech.

Like, I say, it is a decent program. We should thank Ameritech for having the program. We had to fight for it, but it is there, and they also had some very good people from the company running the program.

What is going to happen with these rules?  
Here, by the way are the rules. They are only eight pages long and I am going to put it in a folder of mine and just pass them around,

if people would like to take a look at the rules that are being proposed.

Part of the rules is on the Lifeline program. And what will the rules do to the Lifeline program, if they go into effect? What will they do?

Now, don't you do this, but I am going to do it. Here is what the Lifeline proposed rules from the Public Utilities Commission will do to the current plan that Ameritech has. (Demonstrating) tears it up. And there are three ways in which it tears it up.

Right now, we have 150,000 families and that includes many families who live here in Cleveland on the plan, 75,000 of them checked Block One. That means they get \$10.20 a month.

Under the proposed rules, that is wrong. You do not get \$10.20 anymore. The most you get would be the \$6.00. When you multiply that out \$4.00 dollars x 12 months x 75,000 families, that is over \$3 million dollars that is lost. The Commission has taken away from us \$3 million dollars.

What happened to their Plan II?

Plan II, remember, you can have Caller ID, call waiting and an additional phone line for your computer, etc.

Under the proposed rules of the Commission, you no longer can have the Lifeline program, if you have Caller ID.

Now, those companies have been out there selling everybody Caller ID. Right?

(Audience responding)

MR. MEISSNER: I have Caller ID. A lot of people do, but I never understood why they wanted Caller ID. If somebody comes up to my door, I will not let them in. I will not open up the window. I do not want to see that person. I do not want the bill collector or I do not want whomever it is coming in my house. I just do not open up the door, right?

On the telephone, people want the same privacy. They do not even want people to know that they are home, right?

So, they want the privacy of Caller ID and it has been so blessed that it has become a part of our essential Service, but under the proposed rules, you cannot have Caller ID, unless you can get a doctor to say that it is medically necessary.

Now, I cannot get a hold of my doctor. You cannot get a hold of your doctor. Do you think a doctor is going to sign something like that for anybody?

So, what they have done with Plan II is that for every family that has Caller ID or an additional line, that would be dropped off of the plan. We estimate that it is about 40,000 with the 70,000 families now on Plan II.

What does that equate to in money? Three million more dollars.

So, if the PUCO rules go into effect, you, me and the rests of the community, we lose \$6 million dollars, and not only do we lose the \$6 million dollars a year –

Right now, Ameritech works along with community groups that advertise the program. People get to find out about the USA Program through meetings and community groups. Those community groups get a little bit of money to help them.

Last week, we parceled out in the State of Ohio, \$64,000 dollars. That is part of a budget that we have of \$276,000 dollars.

Under the proposed rules, there is no budget. There is no money. There is no involvement with community groups in the program.

So, three things will happen. There are three major changes all for the worse if these PUCO rules go into effect:

- 1). Lifeline Plan No. 1 goes. There is no longer \$10.20.
- 2). The \$6.30 Program is only open for people who do not have Caller ID and an additional line and those other additional features.
- 3). We no longer have the funds available to help community groups advertise the program.

Now, there are a few changes which might be better, but when you add it all up, I have to say that based on my experience as the Chairman of the USA Program, the Commission has given us something far worse under these rules than we now have.

So, really we should be asking Ameritech, "Listen, work against these rules, they are not in our best interests. They actually are not in the best interests of your programs that you currently have."

(UNKNOWN SPEAKER): That's right.

MR. MEISSNER: That is my testimony, Mr. Chairman. I am available if anybody would like to ask me any questions.

Thank you, very much.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Well, if you have any questions of Mr. Meissner, you can see him privately.

We are not going to take questions during the hearing portion now, so that everyone will have a chance to speak tonight. That is the main purpose of having a public hearing, so, that everyone will have had a chance to speak.

So, if you have questions for a speaker, why don't you see them during the meeting or in the back after the meeting.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: The next person, I think, is Mr. Patmon. Councilman Patmon would like to speak.

You can state your name and who you are and where you are from and whether you have been sworn or giving a sworn statement.

---o0o---

**COUNCILMAN BILL W. PATMON,**

being first duly sworn, further

testified as follows:

---o0o---

**SWORN STATEMENT**

---o0o---

**BY COUNCILMAN PATMON:**

I am Bill Patmon, Councilman for Ward 8, City of Cleveland, and I have been sworn.

I would just like to say that for me, it is a long nightmare that regular people are experiencing from our Government. We are all victims of deregulation. The same deregulation that was supposed to help us with our electric bills and now the telephones is a complete fall out. The deregulation of natural gas was supposed to help us with our gas bills through competition and we now have gas bills that usually run higher than the taxes for our homes.

The deregulation of the airlines, and I occasionally get to fly and it used to be a treat before the deregulation. Now, you are looking at planes that are too small for me, as you can see. They fold up and hand me a bag of something that I do not recognize when I open it. That is deregulation in action.

Now, the phone company is saying, "Well, we want some more deregulation and we want to use what the market will through competition to raise or lower your prices". All wrong.

When you hear somebody tell you, we are going to use the market. The market works like this in economics. What the traffic will bear. And what that means is, squeeze every dime you can out of the consumer. That is what the traffic will bear.

So, I, for one as a Legislator am against deregulation and we all need to speak against deregulation. It is a con that is being perpetrated upon the American public. And, especially, how you have seen it play out in gas, lights and now in the telephone rates.

So, central services or lifeline services for people should be regulated. It is important for you to have the heat on. It is important for you and I to have the lights on. It is important to be able to pick up the telephone and call for service or just to reach



out to somebody. Those are things that should never have been deregulated and I stand on it.

Thank you.

(Audience applauding)

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Thank you,  
Councilman Patmon.

The next speaker is Councilman Jones.

---o0o---

**COUNCILMAN JOSEPH T. JONES,**

being first duly sworn, further

testified as follows:

---o0o---

**SWORN STATEMENT**

---o0o---

**BY COUNCILMAN JONES:**

To Mr. Gruber, to Councilwoman Lewis, to my colleague, Councilman Patmon and to all of you who are here today, I certainly encourage the comments that I have heard thus far, as it relates to this particular issue, and I also agree that when they talked about bringing in deregulation, that deregulation is supposed to push the prices down.

But this year alone, as it relates to East Ohio Gas, it hurt the pocket books of poor people and working families. So,

what we are seeing here now is -- I do not know what PUCO's reasoning was behind it, but I am glad that we are having this hearing and I want to thank Councilwoman Lewis for hosting this in her neighborhood. I would like to see the information based upon the reasons why these rules have to be changed.

So, that is one thing that I would like to request, and, hopefully, PUCO can give us that information, as to why did they come to the conclusions that they did come to, as it relates to creating these new rules for Ameritech.

Also, I want to take the moment, it is going to be a little lengthy, but I think that it is very important to read this into the record, so, that they also get this.

I agree with the paper that we got about PUCO's proposal to allow Ameritech to increase its rates, so, you can follow along there.

All of these points are absolutely on key here and I just also want to take the opportunity to thank our City Council staff, Mr. Gruber, for putting together an excellent piece, as it relates to this rate increase.

**It reads as follows:**

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, (PUCO), regulates Ameritech and other phone companies in Ohio, because there is almost no competition in local telephone service. Residential consumers cannot choose basic service, a second phone line in the home, Caller ID, Call waiting and many other services from anyone but Ameritech in our area, (except on a limited basis in packages of services).

The PUCO now sets the prices for these services when increases are requested by Ameritech, and after consumers and the PUCO's staff have an opportunity to look into the phone company's request, and after the PUCO finds that request reasonable and that it will not give the company excessive profits.

However, Ohio Law does allow phone companies to set rates in an alternative manner, if they can show there is competition for a specific service, (like, Voice Mail, for example), and Ameritech has taken advantage of this ability to establish an "Alternative Regulation Plan."

In fact, Ameritech's Plan, called, "Advantage Ohio" has been in effect for a number of years, and was recently renewed until 2003. Ameritech can set it's own rates for its services for which there is already existing competitive choice for consumers and can make as much profit as it wants. But Ameritech's plan was negotiated and agreed upon by consumer representatives, the company and the PUCO.

Ameritech's plan includes specific commitments like rate reductions, rate freezes, funds for distance learning, money for community computer centers, an internet technology fund, a model low income discount program called USA, consumer protections for poor service, an Ameritech promise to provide local services outside its traditional territory to encourage competition, other actions to permit competitors into Ameritech territory.

Now, the PUCO has proposed new rules for how Ameritech and the other local phone companies in Ohio are regulated, allowing them to elect an "off the shelf" alternative regulation plan, instead of company specific plans, like Ameritech's, that are worked out with consumers and the PUCO. These new rules create what is being called an Elective Alternative Regulation Plan, (EARP), and consumers will have very little input into rates and services.

If the rules are approved as proposed, Ameritech could simply drop its negotiated Plan, with all of its consumer protections and commitments of funds and encouragement of competition.

The proposed rules would allow Ameritech, after 12 months from the approval of the rules to increase rates as high as it wants for packages of services, including, basic service and others like Call Waiting, etc., and for individual services, like, Call Waiting, advanced Caller ID, call forwarding, three-way calling, and other services. Ameritech could double rates after three years for basic caller ID, second and third telephone lines in the home, Caller ID, blocking, call trace, and others.

If Ameritech elects the new alternative form of regulation under the new rules, as Ameritech has said it will, thousands of low income consumers in the USA program would be dropped from the program, because they are not eligible under the new Lifeline plan in the proposed rules. The new Lifeline plan would not provide as large a discount nor would it include as many low income consumers as Ameritech's current USA Program for low income consumers. There are very few commitments under the proposed rules.

Outline of problems with PUCO proposed new rules and regulating Telephone companies:

1 - PUCO has not held enough public hearings, at reasonable times and places, and it has not allowed a formal process for comments to be filed, summarizing the public's view point on the proposal.

2 - That PUCO should not accept the factual allegations made by phone companies without holding an evidentiary hearing, which is a hearing to allow evidence.

3 - There are not articulated reasons for these rules, and no evidence, let alone sufficient proof that the rules are needed or will have the desired effect.

4 - The proposed new rules are not needed, because Alternative Regulation already exists (**Section 4927, Ohio Revised Code**).

5 - Ameritech already has an approved Alternative Regulation Plan that contains better commitments, including a better Lifeline plan than the new rules would allow.

6 - The rules will not have the affect of encouraging more competition or advanced services; there is no evidence of the location and the extent of demand for advanced services; there is no evidence that the commitment will bring it about for those needing it; there is no evidence that giving more flexibility of regulation will encourage advanced services.

7 - The proposed new Rules are illegal. The PUCO must find that there is existing competition or rates must be regulated under already existing rate making.

8 - Ohio Law and common sense requires competition first before deregulation of rates and profits, and there is not sufficient competition in services being deregulated under the proposed rules.

9 - Deregulation requires more commitments, commitments of advanced services, and lifeline that would be required in the proposal are not sufficient.

10 - Ameritech should not be allowed to enter (EARP), while its individual alt reg Plan is still in existence.

11 - The PUCO should drop the proposed Rules, and go back to the drawing board to investigate, with the help of the phone companies and consumers, how best to encourage more competitive choices for the local phone service, and how best to protect consumers.

It is all about the people. It is all about the citizens of the City of Cleveland sending a strong message here today that we are sick and tired of rate increases and being increased daily in our gas and in our electricity and now we are looking at it in our phone bills.

If we continue to pay the rates that are being increased upon us on a monthly basis, we might as well pack our bags and

leave the State of Ohio. This is not right. It is unethical, and I would hope that you would give due consideration to the testimony of the members of PUCO who will get this testimony.

I am Councilman Joe Jones. I represent the Lee-Harvard-Seville-Miles community, which is the southeast section of the City of Cleveland and over 23,000 people. You can feel free to give me a call at (216) 662-5656. The area code is (216) 662-5656. Enough is enough. Look out for poor people and working people.

Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Mr. Jones, were you sworn in?

COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Thank you.

Are there any other Council Members from the City of Cleveland Council?

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: No.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Then, I would like to proceed, with the first person.

As I said, a few people actually signed up, and, then, when we get through those, we will go through the room in order, unless someone has a particular reason that they have to leave early.

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: Mr. Gruber?

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Mrs. Lewis,  
oh, okay.

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: I am back here threatening  
folks. If they do not say something, I am shooting them tonight.

(Laughter from the Audience)

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: My testimony was  
previously done down at the State Office Building when they held  
the meeting at 2:00 o'clock in the day when nobody could get there,  
but myself and Rosa Linda were there.

Where are you Rosa-Linda?

MRS. DEMORE: Right here. (Raised hand).

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: Rosa-Linda DeMore who  
represents the Hough Council was there. Our testimony was as a  
matter of record. But I do want to go on record tonight.

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**COUNCILWOMAN FANNIE M. LEWIS**

being first duly sworn, further

testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS:**

My name is Councilwoman Fannie M. Lewis of Ward 7. I represent, I do know how many number of people they have given us now. I thought it was about 7,000 folks. But, anyway, I am opposed to this plan. I am still not clear as to what it is. That is why we are having this meeting here tonight and the Lifeline, which is vitally important to a whole bunch of people in the City of Cleveland and I do not know how many thousands of people are going to be cut off?

MR. MEISSNER: It is about 30 or 40 thousand in the State of Ohio.

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: About 30 to 40 thousand people.

See, one of the things that bothers me is that they count our heads as the poor people to get money and, then, they



come back to us and give us back door taxes to get it back and this no more than another back door tax.

We are talking about Ameritech tonight. They need to do some of the stuff that they need to do for us. Like, have you ever tried to get anything repaired?

(Audience responding)

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: Like, we do not have no where to pay our phone bills now. You have to get an authorized statement.

(Audience responding)

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: They shut down the office. There might be a lot of things that they need to do for us. My dear friend who is sitting over there, who is a Lobbyist. I love him dearly, who can take the message back that we are not buying. We do not have the money to buy most of this stuff. They have done hit us hard with these gas bills. If anything, there needs to be a decrease. That is what I have to say tonight.

Part of my testimony is already Downtown, and I want to hear you all say something tonight about this before you leave here. We have until 8:30, or at least a quarter to 9:00, and, then, Leroy has got to do his thing.

(Audience Applauding)

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Before

Ms. Demore comes up to speak, does the Summer Youth Workers Council --

Is there a particular person that is going to speak in addition to yourself, Ms. Demore, or are you here representing them?

MS. DEMORE: No. The youngladies are here.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Okay. Then, if she would like to speak, then, she is next on the list.

Ms. Demore, you are next after them.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: You can state your names and where you live. You do not have to state your full addresses, just the City and whether or not you were sworn to testify.

Just state if this is a Sworn Statement, if it is. And you were sworn, so, go ahead with your statement.

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**MISS NATASHA JONES**

being first duly sworn, further

testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MISS JONES:**

Okay. My name is Natasha Jones and I stay on Lakeview Road, and I was sworn in.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: If you could say it a little more loudly, because the Court Reporter has to be able to hear you and do the reporting at the same time.

MISS JONES: Okay.

My name is Natasha Jones. I stay on Lakeview. I have been sworn in. I just wanted to say that I do not think that it is fair to disrupt the services that we have now and what we need to do is get the word out on what people want in service. I just do not understand why they want to raise it up more.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Ms. Shirrell.

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**MS. MARGARET SHIRRELL,**

being first duly sworn, further

testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MS. SHIRRELL:**

My name is Margaret Shirrell and I live in the Buckeye area. I was sworn in. The one thing that I have to say is with myself getting ready to go off to college, I do not think that it would be fair on my part when I am calling home, knowing that my phone bill is already outrageous, but I do not want it to be anymore than what it needs to be when I am going off to school next year.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Mrs. Demore.

---oOo---

**MS. ROSA-LINDA DEMORE**

being first duly sworn, further

testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MS. DEMORE:**

My name is Rosa-Linda Demore. I am the Facilitator for the Hough Community Council. I have been sworn in. I have given written testimony that is on record for the PUCO hearing, but I am stating here tonight that as Facilitator for the Hough Council, which is the voice of the Hough community, we are definitely against anything that causes anymore harm to our families in our community and the harm usually falls on those least able to carry the burden and that is the poor people and if we do not speak up and say something about it, then, we have people becoming endangered with their very livelihood, due to the fact that they have to spend more money just to meet their basic needs.

On a daily basis, we encounter people who are in need of help, because they are in another locality struggling, and, then, they may have more put on them. It is just simply unfair and it is

causing more and more disruption in the homes of the people in the community.

These young people are some of my summer workers this summer who are doing an excellent job and they came tonight, out of dedication and understanding from what they are learning.

So, this summer, I took on the charge to teach them about communities and how communities function, so that when they become adults, they will know how to function in our society.

Thank you.

(Audience Applauding)

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Next is Mr. Tim Walters with the Consumers For Fair Utility Rates.

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**MR. TIMOTHY WALTERS**

being first duly sworn, further

testified as follows

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MR. WALTERS:**

Good evening. My name is Tim Walters and I was sworn in. I am, actually, a part of the group on the near westside of Cleveland, a group that is called, Consumers For Fair Utility Rates.

We originally came together to attempt to deal with the heating problem that came up over the past winter, but we are also concerned about what is going on with the telephone rates.

But since I am sworn in and since this is going to produce testimony, what I would like to say is that I am standing here today in a room with probably about 50 or 60 people, maybe more, from all across the community. People of different ages and people of different backgrounds who have come together, because they are concerned about what is going on with their telephone rates.

There is one thing that everybody should know, that this is not something that normally happens where people get to

speaking about this, because people normally do not know that it has happened, until they open up their bill or they look in the paper and they see that rates have gone up.

So, it is not just the issue that we are going to be charged more money, and I object very much to that, but it is an issue that, we, the people of the community are not asked about what is going on and just not given an opportunity to speak about it.

Two things happened with the public hearing that took place in this community. One, is where it took place. It took place at 2:00 o'clock on Friday afternoon in Downtown, Cleveland.

Now, I am fortunate, I am a community organizer. So, I get paid to go to meetings like that.

Now, I am assuming that there is not too many other people in the room that can get up and go today and go down to a meeting like that.

Now, the Chairman of the PUCO was asked, why was it held at that time? He gave two reasons. One, he said, "Well, most people do not like to go Downtown in the evening and it was also difficult to find a meeting place that would accommodate people on such a short notice." This is a very nice place. They fed us. It is cool. The chairs are comfortable. There is a chance to sit down and talk and to let your feelings be known.



Another thing that you all should know and that should go into the record, is that at the public hearing, Councilwoman Lewis, specifically, asked the PUCO to hold more hearings. She, specifically asked, as did others, for them to come out to the neighborhoods and listen to the people.

As far as I know, not only have they not done it, but there has not been any type of response whatsoever.

And the fact that we are doing this when we asked them to come out in here, because the only way that they can find out about this is to read the testimony that comes out of this and that will give an indication of how much they feel or what some of us think.

So, we not only have to say, one, we do not want the rates and we do not want increases or we do not want the changes, but we want to send a message loud and clear, whether it is gas, whether it is electric, whether it is telephone or whatever it is, if you are going to do something that is going to impact us in some way, then, we want the opportunity and we want the time to comment on that in places in our neighborhood at times that we can get there.

If we do not keep on saying that over and over and over again, then, one of the things that is going to happen, is that,

we are going to continue to open up the bills and go, "Oh, My God, and you are not going to have any idea what to do about it.

I would like to close by saying that our group, again, is a small group of citizens on the near westside. We are called, "Consumers for Fair Utility Rates." I work out of the May Dugan Center.

If anything takes place at the City of Cleveland on any of this, I ask that we be contacted, because one of the things that we feel is very important, is, we, as people of this community have got to start reaching across Ward lines and have got to start going to the eastside and the westside of the City, if we are going to work together to make this happen.

Now, I am going to leave shortly and it is not because I do not want to hear what the rest of you say, but my grand daughter was one of those youngladies that was playing back there and she has been tagging along with me all day long, and I think she has finally figured out that what I do is not the most exciting thing in the world, as far as she is concerned, but she is ready to go home and play in the sprinkler.

So, I thank you all very much and I also thank again, Councilwoman Lewis for having me here tonight.

(Audience applauding)

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Shawn Hilliard.

State your name and where you live?

MR. HILLIARD: My name is Shawn Hilliard.

I live at 15822 Westview Avenue. That is Cleveland, Ohio 44128.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: And were you sworn  
in?

MR. HILLIARD: Yes, I was.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Okay.

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**MR. SHAWN HILLIARD**

being first duly sworn, further

testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MR. HILLIARD:**

First of all, I wanted to thank Councilwoman Fannie Lewis for inviting me here today and Councilman Joe Jones, he is the man. I am here, basically, on behalf of my parents who were not able to attend today.

Basically, my mom and dad got a bill, I would say about four or five months ago. There gas bill was somewhere between \$45.00 dollars a month. They got a bill, like, four months

ago and it was a \$1,000 dollars. It got so bad that my mom had to go back to work. She was retired. I had to move in and help her out and if it wasn't for Councilman Joe Jones, you know, who I know personally --

I mean, even to this day, my mom and dad still have bills that are a \$1,000 dollars or so.

The East Ohio Gas Company came out one day and changed my mother's meter and they did not even tell her that they changed the meter. So, when she got her bill, they said that they had informed her that they changed the meter, but when she got her bill, there was nothing in the mail stating that the rates were going to go up. There was nothing in the mail stating that they were going to increase her bill, so, what was she suppose to do?

You know, so, I had to come in. I had to move back into the home with my parents and help them pay their bills.

So, I am, basically, here just for future generations, because one day I will be a home owner and I believe that it is wrong for a company, such as East Ohio Gas and other companies just to take advantage of, you know, people who are retired, people who are senior citizens and even people who are, you know, every day workers. I think that it is wrong.

You go to a gas station and they charge you almost \$2.00 for gas, and, then, by the time you cut the engine on, you are already half way out of gas.

So, it is just wrong and someone needs to stand up and say that it is wrong. So, since my parents did not know once again that they were changing the bill, I am here on behalf of them saying that it is wrong. We should send a message back to them stating that we need to have an income that is not in the best interests of your pockets, but in the best interests of the people.

So, I wanted to thank you Councilwoman Lewis for inviting me and I hope that everyone will speak up and definitely say that you are not going to take this anymore.

Thank you.

(Audience Applauding)

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: That was the last name that I had on the list. If we could just start here in the front, and, then, we will go back. Then, if you have a statement to make, you can stand right up here as the other speakers have done so far.

State your name, et cetera.

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**MRS. JACQUELINE D. PERRIES,**

being first duly sworn, further

testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MRS. PERRIES:**

My name is Jacqueline D. Perries. I represent the Fairfax Business Association. I live in Ward 6 on East 82<sup>nd</sup> Street.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Do you need to be sworn?

MRS. PERRIES: No.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Okay.

MRS. PERRIES: I guess, I am concerned with the clarity of the cell phone service.

In our area, there is a big area where you cannot hear very clear through your cell phone. The power line up there interferes with the cell phone, the computer and the television. Here is a card that was left on the inside of a petition. They said that the cell phones needed a ciber net on the telephone. I just wanted to know who is in charge of correcting the problem by there

being such a strong problem with the power lines in the area that messes up the telephones.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Perhaps, Mrs. Perries, you would like to speak to the Representative from Ameritech or the Representative from the Office of Consumers Counsel? They may be able to answer some of your questions. They are the two gentlemen over here that can direct you to the right people.

MRS. PERRIES: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Gruber.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Next.

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**MS. SHIRLEY SMITH**

being first duly sworn, further testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MS. SMITH**

My name is Shirley Smith and I live at 7400 Wade Park. I live in the 7<sup>th</sup> Ward and we need help. Suppose the bills on the telephone go up so high that we cannot afford it?

What about our older people and the seniors, and all of the elderly that are sick. If we cannot have a telephone, how are we going to be able to call for help or call 911? I think it is terrible. The big shots at Ameritech cannot live on what we live on a month. It takes them two or three days to use up what we get in a month.

Thank you.

(Audience applauding)

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Ms. Smith, if I can ask, were you sworn?

MS. SMITH: Yes.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Okay, then. You were sworn. Thank you.



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**MR. FRANK REID**

being first duly sworn, further  
testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MR. REID:**

I was sworn in. My name is Frank Reid and I live in  
the Hough area.

Basically, I am going to get straight to the point.

Number one, go back to the drawing board and do this thing the  
right way. I have a fax line, a regular phone line and an access for  
business purposes, and I looked at my phone bill and I see all of  
these little current hidden taxes that we have on there now.

(Audience Responding)

MR. REID: I believe there was one tax, which I found  
out was supposed to be helping with the Internet access in the  
schools. This is something that was going on a while back. But  
the bottom line is, let's go back to the drawing board and get the  
Commission to do this thing the right way.

I believe in tax cuts. So, cut the taxes on the gas and  
the phone bills. But, of course, that would involve the legislature.

That would be another solution, as far as the high rates in gas and electricity that we have and cut some of these Federal taxes and State taxes also. But the bottom line is let's go back to the drawing board and that is all I have to say. Thank you.

(Audience applauding)

**(Un-Sworn Statement by Mr. Elwood Clark)**

MR. CLARK: Good evening. My name is Elwood Clark. I live in Ward 7 off of 84<sup>th</sup> and Wade Park, and I to am opposed to the increases that we are about to receive. It sort of goes back to the medieval days when it was taxation without representation.

Basically, from what I am understanding, that is what is happening here. They sort of decided that we are going to come together as the higher up in hierarchy and this is what we are going to do, as far as with your telephone and your gas bills.

So, I think that they need to bring it back to the community and have more public hearings, so, that we can have our voices and our say so on what goes on out here, and I think that you need to send a clear message to our legislature that this is what we want.

But I just wanted to go on record, saying, that I am opposed to it and I think that we need to go back to the drawing board for more consideration, because I am a family man. I have a

family. I have three kids. I have a daughter and two boys and a wife and we have just about everything you can name from the Internet to call waiting and Caller ID.

So, again, I just want to go on record and say that I am opposed to it and if there are going to be some public hearings, then, maybe we need to boycott of maybe we need to get back to the "Day in Court."

But I know one thing from being involved with the Labor Movement and stuff, is that, if you hit them in the pocket, that is when they listen to you.

(Audience Responding)

MR. REID: So, maybe, we need to push something. I understand you need your phones to get in touch with the police for certain things, like that there, but it doesn't have to be alone.

We can put something together like they did in the day, some type of a system where if an emergency comes up, you get with your neighbor and we make ways of getting the word out, when you are in the poor. That is how you hurt anybody in big business. You hit them in the pocket. That might be an avenue that we could pursue. And, no, I wasn't sworn.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: We are not taking questions right now. If there is something else, we are going to go in order.

At this particular meeting, if you are going to have to leave, then, let me know, otherwise we are going to try and go in order.

These persons that came up to the front -- You can go ahead ma'am.

State your name for the record?

MRS. GARNER: Okay. My name is Rosalie Garner.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Were you sworn today?

MRS. GARNER: Pardon?

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Were you sworn in?

MRS. GARNER: Yes.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Okay.

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**MRS. ROSALIE GARNER,**

being first duly sworn, further

testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MRS. GARNER:**

My name is Rosalie Garner. I am the Precinct Committee person in Ward 7. My complaint is that the gentleman did not go down and read far enough on this paper.

For the senior citizens, it says, note, Social security, VIP and Medicare do not qualify and we have to be on low income or on Social Security.

Now, why don't we qualify? He did not read that part and I want to know why we do not qualify? The people who are on Social Security would like to know why. There are a lot of us who are on low income. I would love to ask the gentleman that who did this.

**PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER:** Okay.

Thank you, ma'am.

Sir.

BISHOP HILTON: My name is Bishop Hilton and I am Pastor of the Faith Temple Church of God, which is located on the corner of 71st and Lexington Avenue, and I am also a resident in Ward 7.

So, I am not a Pastor who lives in the suburbs and pastor in the City. I live in the City and I pastor in the City.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Bishop, were you sworn in?

BISHOP HILTON: No, I was not.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Then, the Court Reporter will swear you in.

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**BISHOP JOHN L. HILTON**

being first duly sworn, further

testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY BISHOP HILTON:**

So, I am a Pastor who lives in the City, as well as  
Pastor in the City.

If history is correct or if I was taught properly, it was  
the Boston Tea Party that started the war. It was a war about  
taxes being taxed on products that were essential for sustaining  
life.

So, here we are once again, we took a lickin this past  
winter on our gas bills. We paid through the nose and still paying.  
Some people are still paying for last winter's debt. My question  
today is how much is enough?

How many millions will they make and how many  
years will it take them to spend the millions that you already have?  
So, why tax the little man any further? We have enough no matter  
what. I deal with Parishioners who can hardly get from one  
paycheck to the other one without coming and asking for some

type of assistance and here you are wanting to throw another hold on the pie to keep the general public playing the game.

Then, the way you do it. You slip it in, and because we have no other choice, we must pay it or else.

And the service that you give us is lousy and not only is it lousy, it used to be where you could forget to pay your phone bill for a couple of days and wouldn't nothing happen.

Now, they will cut you off and they will cut you off, and after they cut you off, they charge you to turn you back on.

So, how much more do you want? Yes, I am upset and I know I am not in my pulpit, but I feel like I should be.

(Laughter and Applause from the Audience)

BISHOP HILTON: We are paying too much to the PUCO. The PUCO has been appointed to guard the people. You have been appointed to watch out and to look out for the people, but not to look out for the big business.

I do not want to say that you taking anything under the table, because I do not want to believe that. I want to believe that you are going to do that which is just and honest, pure and true to the people to whom you serve. So, stand up for us and tell Ameritech no. Enough is enough.

(Audience Applauding)



PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Next. Have you been sworn?

MRS. PITEL: Yes, I have.

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**MRS. SABERNA PITEL,**

being first duly sworn, further

testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MRS. PITEL:**

My name is Saberna Pitel. I live at 8704 Superior Avenue. I am not going by what the Reverend just said, but he is right in everything he said. Enough is enough. I am in Councilwoman's Lewis' Committee in Ward 7, which I belong to. I am living witness and from what we have been through together, I think from where I live at, I know we have had enough on that end. From Superior all the way up to Kenmore and going cross Wade Park.

Now, if Ameritech does not appreciate us as was, really they should thank us for sticking with them. They should tell the PUCO no.

Why raise something for the poor people, and the sick people? That would only hurt the poor people more.

If it means us going out and we might have to decide to have to keep them from accepting this proposal here -- We are not going for it. I think we have had enough.

Is there anybody up here going for that? What do you think?

(Audience Applauding)

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: We will start with the second row, sir. If you want to come up.

---oOo---

**MR. CHARLIE DEMORE, SR.**

being first duly sworn, further  
testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MR. DEMORE:**

My name is Charlie Demore, Sr. I live at  
5604 Luther Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44103, and I am the  
President of Ward 7, and I have been sworn in.

I am not going to take up too much time. I just want to  
say ditto to all that has been said, because I am one that is  
opposed to the high or moderate gas bills and the phone bills, and,  
whatever. I am not for increasing or doing anything that is going  
to make me more miserable than I am.

We are all have been assessed to enough, and like they  
said, enough is enough. Some people are living in much shade,  
while some people are living on the street. Is that fair? No it is  
not.

We should have more compassion for people. We are  
still human beings. We do not have no money, but we have  
feelings.

We do not have no money, but one thing I want to say all of you, you do have power. You can stick together and the more we stick together, you find that where there is unity, there is strength.

If more of us stick together, they will have to listen to us.

So, the next time at the next meeting, if there is a next meeting, I hope that there will be double or triple the amount of people that will come out and send these people a message and let them know that we do not appreciate what is going on. Thank you.

(Audience applauding)

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**MRS. GEORGIA BRANTZ**

being first duly sworn, further

testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MRS. BRANTZ:**

My name is Georgia Brantz. I live in Ward 7. I am the Vice President of the Ward Club. I have been sworn in.

My thing is that I am a Retiree, and, you know that once you are retired, -- I know a lot of you are retired up here. When you get your money the first of the month, you spend that and by the time you pay your bills, you do not have anything left. And an increase in our phone bills, I would probably have to have my phone shut off.

Unless, I go and get a job and who is going to hire me at my age. But I think we do not need another raise in anything, unless they are raising our paycheck.

(Audience Responding)

MRS. BRANTZ: So, enough is enough, and I think we should all stick together for each other. We do not need anymore raises.

Thank you.

(Audience applauding)

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**MR. WILLIE STARK,**

being first duly sworn further

testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MR. STARK:**

I have been sworn in. My name is Willie Stark. I am from Ward 7. And I agree, like, with everything that Mr. Demore said, but what I want to really refer to is the PUCO.

I was under the impression that the PUCO was an advocate for the people and it seems to me that they are an advocate for the utilities, because of the fact that when they hold a public meeting, it is not any easier once the people are gone, but sometimes during the day for the cause of the ministry, people have to do other things. I think it is time that the PUCO start advocating for the people that they were put on to advocate for. Thank you.

(Audience applauding)

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**MS. CORINNE WILSON,**

being first duly sworn, further  
testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MS. WILSON:**

Good evening to all.

THE AUDIENCE: Good evening.

MS. WILSON: My name is Corinne Wilson, and I have been sworn in. I am a resident of Ward 7, and a wonderful, wonderful, Councilwomen Fannie Lewis. I thank her and I thank Ms. DeMore for having called me and making me aware of this situation and this meeting. I am a resident and a business owner residing at 1598 Addison Road.

I am here to state to the PUCO and to whoever else is concerned that I definitely and vehemently object to any raise or to any increase in our telephone bill.

As you well know, we have had an increase in gas. We have had an increase in electricity, and whether you know it or not, we have had an increase in the water.

(Audience commenting)

MS. WILSON: And, now, we are getting it through the telephone company. I would like to say, objectively, that I have no bad comments in regards to Ameritech personally, because, basically, I feel that they have given me what is suppose to be decent service.

However, to me, their service does not necessitate an increase. Because if you come to my building, you will see the telephone wiring that has been set up. It is not well done. The telephone line is draping over my door. Each time I open the door, I have to lift up the telephone cord to get into my door or to go into my office.

So, I feel that everybody wants to earn a profit, so, I am not objecting or saying that it is bad for the telephone company to want more money. For all I know, they might need it.

However, I feel that with all of these companies, the gas company, the electric company, the water company and, now, the telephone company, none of them are giving us any service at this moment to warrant any increase.

So, I am a business women. If I am going to go up on my charges, then, I should have something to offer my clients, besides telling them, okay, your taxes last year costs ex-amount of dollars. This year before we prepared the taxes on "x" amount of dollars. You understand. And I am poor. But even with being



poor, I offer my clients something in regards to saying thank you for coming to me this year.

So, I feel that if with this package deal that they are coming up with, which I admit to I am not completely and fully convinced about, because, basically, I have heard nothing said to us that for this increase, we are going to offer you this.

(Audience responding)

MS. WILSON: We are going to offer you that. You are going to see improvement here or you are going to see an improvement there. And this is something that I have to say is true.

We are not only the telephone companies, but for all of these corporations out there, and, of course, we, the small people, the struggling people, we are the ones that are suffering, which is the case from history and from the biblical times, that has been the case. But it does not mean that we cannot rise up and start doing something about it.

So, I am hopeful that we will not only come to the right thing, but that we will stand behind our Councilwoman. We will stand behind our Ward 7, which is our identification.

I am proud to say that I reside here and have lived here for quite a long while and quite a long time.

I hope that you will stand up and do what is necessary to make whoever needs to listen, listen to us, and not sit down on our behinds, like we did with the closing of Mount Sinai Hospital where my children were born and just sit down and talk about it, and, then, go sit back and watch television and drink a cup of coffee.

I hope that you will start getting up off of your you know whats and really start making an impact, if it means "boycotting". If it means going to Columbus. If it means going to the PUCO headquarters or whatever to let them know that we are for real.

Do you understand what I am saying? We have got to do more than just talk. We have got to get up and move out and forth in unity, if necessary. Because everyone here has said, basically, enough is enough. It is time for us to rise and when I say, "rise," I mean, actively, rise. It means going and standing out in the rain in front of them or whatever and doing it.

So, that we can at least say that in our years coming up, that we might have a little chance, a little opportunity to have a little comfort in our lives.

Thank you, very much.

(Audience applauding)

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**MS. JEAN HOGAN,**

being first duly sworn,

further testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MS. HOGAN:**

Good evening.

THE AUDIENCE: Good evening.

MS. HOGAN: I have been sworn in. I am Jean Hogan.

I am the President of the Euclid Avenue Street Club. I live at 9900 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44106. The best thing that I can say is that I am opposed to any rate increase on our telephone bills.

I mean, we do not have a bottomless pit full of money that every time somebody want to raise the rates, that we just let out and pay it. I am a retiree and most of the people on my street are either retired or on some kind of program. There is not enough money available to maintain yourself, to pay your rent or your mortgage or whatever and all of the other utilities, and eat and have medical. And every time we stick our hands in the mail box,

there is a new letter about some increased bill. I think the PUCO should look at this again and I enjoy Ameritech, and all of those wonderful things that you gave us and said, "Enjoy," and now you want to go up on it. We cannot afford it. Thank you.

(Audience Applauding)

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**MS. FLOSSIE WHITSON**

being first duly sworn, further

testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MS. WHITSON:**

My name is Flossie Whitson. I have been sworn in. I live on Euclid Avenue. I am the Secretary of the Euclid Avenue Street Club, and I retired last year, and, as, you know, I am on a fixed income and right away, I was hit with a heavy gas bill.

And, I am opposed to any of the raises. I am opposed to the PUCO for allowing the Ameritech Company to go up on our telephone bill.

So, I would like to say that enough is enough, and we as a people need to do something about it.

Thank you.

(Audience applauding)

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**MRS. CHARLOTTE TATE**

being first duly sworn, further

testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MRS. TATE:**

I have been sworn in. My name is Charlotte Tate. I live at 1783 Crawford Road. My husband passed in March.

Now, I have a mortgage, gas, lights, a water bill and the other little things, but the telephone bill, they charge you enough with long distance. The Caller ID is so much. The call waiting is so much and, please, do not get no collect calls. They hit us with a phone bill for \$300 or \$400 dollars. You try to pay that and, then, as soon as you turn around, they are calling you again, asking you when are you going to pay them.

Now, they want to do something else. It's not right and I am opposed to this.

Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Last, but not least, we will start with the third and fourth rows, the first person.

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**MS. CAMILLE SMITH**

being first duly sworn, further

testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MS. SMITH:**

I have been sworn in. My name is Camille Smith.  
I live on East 97<sup>th</sup> Street across Cedar Road. I work for  
the City of Cleveland. I am a Housing Inspector, and I disagree with  
the increase of the utilities period. I am a single parent. I just  
bought my first home, which I do not think that I will be buying  
another one, because all of these utilities, you know, because of gas,  
lights have gone up. But one thing about it is I want to know who  
these people are who are making the decisions without the  
consumer?

Okay. There are more poor people out here than rich.  
You see what I am saying? I mean, I work every day and I can  
maintain or whatever, but still I am saying, you know, I do not  
have a husband. I only have one income coming in the house,  
and, if you all had to make a decision on paying these bills or

eating, what do you think you are going to do. You are going to eat. You know, what I am saying.

I mean, my phone would just go off. You know what I mean? That is basically it. But there are a lot of poor people out here.

And I do not think it is right and I think that we should always have the decision on the utilities, because we are the consumers and we are the ones that pay the bills.

(Audience applauding)

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**MR. NORRIS MARTIN,**

being first duly sworn, further  
testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MR. MARTIN:**

My name is Norris Martin. I reside in the City of Cleveland and I work in the Hough area. My testimony is sworn. I am totally opposed to a rate increase by Ameritech. I am really opposed to a rate increase being granted to Ameritech by the PUCO.

This rate increase will effect those who definitely cannot afford to have their telephone bill rates increased.

Especially, those people who are not covered by the systems plan, such as people on social security, VIP, and Medicare. These people do not qualify, and until these people qualify, I do not think anybody should have to pay an additional telephone rate increase.

(Audience applauding)

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Sir.

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**MR. JIM LAWRENCE**

being first duly sworn, further testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MR. LAWRENCE:**

My testimony is sworn. My name is Jim Lawrence. I work at the Albrecht Facility on East 55<sup>th</sup> Street. We work with a lot of people who use our patient services, like, for drug and alcohol treatment for defenders. Those people who cannot afford stuff. They are working very hard to get jobs and these people cannot afford these kind of rate increases.



We are talking about residential, but they really do try to work hard to get back on line from any kind of increase in finances for them.

If there is any kind of increase in existence, we try to help people move forward and sometimes we just want to say that we oppose, because they just cannot afford it and they are just trying to work to get back on their feet.

Thank you.

(Audience applauding)

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: We will start in the fifth row, the fifth or sixth row at this time.

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**MRS. CAROL LEE JONES,**

being first duly sworn, further

testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

**BY MRS. JONES:**

I am Carol Lee Jones. I live in Fannie Lewis' Ward. I think that it is ridiculous, because we have not gotten over the gas bill and now they want to put the rates on the telephones.

Now, where do they think the poor people is going to get all of this money? I think that we should get together and get a march and go to Washington. Thank you.

(Audience Applauding)

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Okay, next.

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**MRS. ANNIE MOORE**

being first duly sworn, further

testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MRS. MOORE:**

My name is Annie Moore. I have been sworn in. I have no comparisons to the gas bill or the electric bill, because a bill is a bill. I am on low income. If I do not have the money to pay, then, what can I say. I just have to shut it down and walk. If they shut us down, they are not going to make the money they want.

So, let's march and let them know that if you want us to keep your business going, help us keep ours going and withhold the rates. I oppose.

(Audience Applauding)

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: I am sorry, we still have some people in the row in front of you.

Come on up. I am sorry.

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**MR. ABDUL SHAHEED**

being first duly sworn, further testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MR. SHAHEED:**

My name is Abdul Shaheed, and I am the Coordinator of the Hough Neighborhood Opportunity Center. I have a couple of things that I would like to say.

Number one, I have the opportunity every day to actually talk to individuals, and, actually, look at their budget and the kind of money that people are making. The highest information on the budget is really rent. Once you get past rent, then, it is broken down into utilities.

With the gas, the recent increase in gas, the State had to come back and offer a certain subsidy to help individuals, so, they could pay those gas bills. So, in all actuality, the people do not have the money, okay.

So, now, we are talking about increase in telephone bills, an increase in water bills and an increase in everything. So, where does it stop?

With welfare reform, there are so many individuals who have came off of the welfare roles and they are not on fixed income anymore. The jobs that they are getting are actually below the amount of money that they need to survive.

So, I have been trying to digest as much from this information as I can. It started off by talking about deregulation, and, I believe, I heard somebody say that, "Well, if we deregulate, is that supposed to bring the prices down?"

And, also, it was said that in the deregulation process, it allowed other individual companies to become a part of that process.

But, then, there was a criteria set, so that over a certain period of time, that company could now compete with the larger company. It was already set up, which was the impossibility.

So, it is like a con game. You had a person. You had these large companies that are just sitting there waiting. It's like when somebody is waiting to cut. The new install companies were not going to do it, so, now, what do they do? They say, o.k., we are

going to penalize somebody. We are going to penalize the people.

You see.

So, then, they go up on the rates. Then, the PUCO, -- it's like a con game. It's like they are in cahoots with them, you know. So, I mean, with me, it's like a con game.

So, I agree that we have to come together and stand up and organize, you know, around these issues. That is very important or are we just going to allow the conglomerates -- We have been talking about deregulation. It is business as usual and it worked. Now, we are being penalized.

(Audience Responding)

MR. SHAHEED: That's all I have to say.

(Audience Applauding)

MRS. STEWART: Good afternoon. My name is Barbara Stewart. I am a Union member. I want to speak, but is it okay if I do not speak on record? If you do not want me to, I won't.

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: Take her off record.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Is there anyone else in that row, on this side who wants to speak on the record?

(No Response)

Were you sworn in, Mrs. Stewart?

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Then, you may go ahead.

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**MS. BARBARA STEWART**

being first duly sworn, further

testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MS. STEWART:**

My name is Barbara Stewart and I have been sworn in. I live at 1848 East 89<sup>th</sup> Street. I am a proud resident of Ward 7, under the leadership of Council person Fannie Lewis. I would like for it to be a matter of record that I do object to an increase in any additional charges on our bills.

I am one of the people who is still suffering from the increase in the gas bills and the other utilities. Someone said the water and lights, and, also, the sewage has increased. I would like to see as Councilman Jones said, reasons for the increase.

But in addition to that, I would like for the Commissioner to explain to the people before decisions are made, the reasoning, but I also would like to see them explain to us in laymans terms, so, we can understand what they are saying.

Like, the gas and the other utilities, should get a flyer in the mail, which I myself do not understand -- So, I cannot make

sound decisions as to the choices that I can make, because I do not know who to go with. I know nothing about the company. So, I do nothing. But when I do nothing, I get this outraged bill, \$1700 and \$1300 a month for a gas bill alone.

Several months after the increases have hit us, we have representatives from the company coming to speak to us to explain what is going on. They pass out business cards to us and say that, yes, if you call us, we will help you. However, we are not able to reach any of the representatives by phone and none of the calls are returned.

So, I am still where I was several months ago with no answers and still with un-paid bills, working with the same salary, with no assistance, and, now, I am getting an additional increase in my phone bill.

So, I would like to have, in addition, some assistant coming in and giving us the knowledge of why these things are happening and explain to us in laymans terms and, let us, the people make the decisions.

Unless, I would say, we could go back to our Government and say, I know it is a matter of legislation, but we must find -

I know that it is about money and we are living in a high tech society where everything has increased except our salaries.

(Audience Responding)

MS. STEWART: So, we must increase the utilities to keep up with the high tech and to pay the high professionals to give us these services. Perhaps, we can go back and decrease the taxes, increase social security, increase SSI, and, whatever, else, and, especially go back and increase the minimum wages.

Therefore, we will be able to make some accommodations and, maybe, have a little cushion, so, that we can pay some of these bills.

I would just like to end by saying that this is a point in time when we must all come together.

Whatever differences we have, whatever side of the fence we may be on, these things could effect everybody, whether you are employed, un-employed, if you are a parent, if you have friends, relatives or whatever.

So, we should come together and those of us who say, "well, we do not have any money. We cannot go to Washington and we cannot do these things". We are going to have to come up with something.



The way that I was brought up from down south is that when one person eats, everybody eats on the block.

So, we have to get some busses and do whatever we have to do to raise money, to go to Washington.

Whatever we need to do, we can only do it by going in force, showing that we do totally disagree and object to any increase.

That's all I have.

(Audience Applauding)

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Is there anybody else in that row?

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**MS. BENITA CLEVELAND**

being first duly sworn, further testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MS. CLEVELAND:**

I am sworn in. Hello. My name is Benita Cleveland. I am a resident of Ward 7. I am educated. I have a pretty decent job. I am not a senior citizen. I have two children. I have a mortgage. I am not retired and I am not poor yet.

(Laughter from the Audience)

MS. CLEVELAND: So, point of record, I would just like to say that I object and I vehemently oppose to telephone rules that would allow local companies, Ameritech, to increase charges with Caller ID and second lines, and allow unlimited increases to services, like, call waiting and call forwarding, all without any view of the telephone company's operations. I object. Enough is enough.

(Audience Applauding)

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**MS. LIZ SMITH**

being first duly sworn, further  
testified as follows:

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**SWORN STATEMENT**

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**BY MS. SMITH:**

My name is Liz Smith and I am a resident of Ward 7.  
I live down the street. I am a new home owner. I have been in the Ward for about four years. I am really upset. I have a problem with deregulation, when deregulation causes an increase in anything, when it says that it is suppose to help you, when in actuality, it really hurts you.

I am listening to all of the people talk about how it is hurting them, and, Benita is my next door neighbor. I was just sitting here just listening, and, I said, I make a reasonable salary. I am a single female and I have a house. I have a mortgage. I have a car note. I have utility bills. I am always in a fight with utility companies about how they go about billing.

For instance, the utility bills, they give you the estimate of one month and, then, when you get the next month's bill, you are trying to figure out how they calculated the estimate to actual out. And when you ask them to explain the estimate from actuality from one month to the next, then, they give you a throw, "Well, Ms. Smith, you can do this, this, that and there."

No, I want you to tell me and show me how you do it and it is always a discrepancy. I am very educated, and as a matter of fact, I am still a student and I am in school now. I have a decent job. I work for the City of Cleveland. I am very intelligent and I can add one and one is two. I am not poor, but I make a moderate income. I am still recovering, and as of right now, I owe the gas company from my bill is \$759.00

I do not talk that much on the telephone, because that is all I do all day is talk to people on the telephone, to the Attorneys, and whatever else all day long. So, when I come home, I do not want to talk, unless, there is something to talk about.

So, I decided that with AT & T, I do not make that many long distance calls, but I get penalized, because I do not make long distance calls, they charge me a fee, because I do not make any.

(Audience responding)

MS. SMITH: So, I have to be penalized because I do not make long distance phone calls.

So, they charge me a service fee for not making them. Then, I get this little bitty card in the mail and because I am busy trying to do homework, I will say, "Well, I couldn't decide. I will read it later." When I read it, I found out that they were charging me on my phone bill for AT & T, a service fee for the bill for AT & T now.

So, I had to try and call them and tell them I want a bill from AT & T to keep Ameritech from charging me a fee for just putting that \$3.00 and something that they charge me every month, plus all of these little taxes that they add to it --

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Amen.

MS. SMITH: -- For my phone bill.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Sure enough.

MS. SMITH: So, by the time I get my AT & T bill just for not using the phone, I am paying \$5.00 dollars and something

taxes just for some other fees that they tell me that I have to pay for the rural people in the rural area that have computer services.

But the Cleveland Public School System, they do not charge me that tax for them. I feel like if I had to pay a tax, it looks like I would pay it for where I live at, not for some place where I do not live at.

(Audience Responding)

MS. SMITH: So, I am constantly being penalized for not trying to say, I called Ameritech and I gave up -- I want them to reduce my phone bill. Because my general phone bill is \$47.00 dollars a month and now it cost just to have a phone.

So, you have Caller ID, to see who is calling you, they charge you for that. When it boils down and I call them up, they say, "Check the battery, see if it is this that and the other".

Well, I finally got a warm body, because before all I was getting was this automated service disk over the phone.

Plus, I am paying \$47.00 every month, and I couldn't even get a warm body. Somebody told me how to bypass it, so, I could get the warm body, so, you know, you have to learn how to play their game.

(Audience Responding)

MS. SMITH: So, I am learning real good how to play the game. So, you know you listen and to keep from listening, all

you do is hit zero, and, hopefully, they do not come with an answering service and say, "Well, you know we are busy or we are tied up or this is a busy season. Call back between so and so." And you might get so and so."

And I am like what are we paying for. You have gone so far to make it, that you cannot even talk to a body and you cannot for the automated system.

Because if I have a problem, I want to be able to say, Mr. So and So, I have a problem. This is what my problem is.

How do I rectify it? But they do not have a problem getting a warm body if they want some money, when they are trying to sell you something.

So, I object strongly for having to pay for services that I do not use and that I do not need.

So, I say, well, I have Caller ID. I have call waiting. I have speed calling. I have back up, whenever I have to Star-69. I do not care who calls me. If I do not answer the phone, I do not want to talk.

So, when I Star-69 somebody to talk and to find out who calls me, then, why do I have to pay for Star-69, when I do not ever use it anyway.

So, I asked them how do I reduce my phone bill? They told me that I could not reduce it. But if I wanted this package or if I wanted call waiting, --

So, if someone calls me, because of the job that I have, then, I can get somebody else. Or else, I could hold them and get somebody else who is calling, because it might be the Judge calling.

They said, "Well, Ms. Smith, you cannot do that". It costs me more to have three items on my phone, than it does to have ten.

(Audience Responding)

MS. SMITH: That is ridiculous.

Why do I pay for all this service that I do not need, when I cannot reduce it and get it in the package, unless I take all of it and pay more.

So, I am paying more for three items, than I would for ten, which is ridiculous. I do not need all of that.

(Audience Responding)

MS. SMITH: And I still cannot get them to reduce my bill to where it is reasonable for me, so, I am constantly being penalized for not using a service that I do not need anyway.

If I call Mrs. Lewis, I would pick up the phone and call Mrs. Lewis and if somebody else is calling, I would say, "Would you

please hold a minute?" I have to answer this other call and I will be right back. But I cannot even get that without paying \$47.00 dollars a month in a package deal and all of this mess that I do not need.

So, now, they want the right to be able to go up on all of this little mess that I do not need –

(Laughter from the Audience)

MS. SMITH: And make somebody elses phone bill higher.

I do not understand the economics of it all, except when I was younger, I didn't always understand what the word "laissez faire" meant, but I understand it fully now. And for those that do not know, I learned that Laissez faire means, "Let the buyer beware."

So, that means everything you use, everything you get, you have to be aware of it.

And I was so appalled, because I got my water and sewer bill. My water bill was up a \$10 dollars and 59 cents. My sewer bill was \$29 dollars and 71 cents.

(Laughter from the Audience)

MS. SMITH: How can I use more sewer, than I use water. To me that does not add up, but that is what they are charging you.



(Audience Responding)

MS. SMITH: So, I do not understand, the more the regulation, the higher my bill gets and I get less service and I use less.

I do not even have cable service.

Why would I have cable service if I am not at home most of the time, so, why would I pay for extra. I am trying to reduce my bill. I have a mortgage.

So, I would say that I average out my bill from \$1,500 a month.

Now, I am paying almost \$3,000 dollars a month for less service and more bills.

Now, how does that add up economically? And I am single. So, I am just saying if I made a decent income, it may look good on paper, but I am almost in bankrupt trying to pay utility bills, which does not make sense.

I am totally against Ameritech, East Ohio Gas. I tell you I am finished with the gas company, because they tell you, you have to pay them to use their lines and all of this other stuff.

So, why go to another company when you have to go through the same company to pay this company and pay that company for what. But it use to be \$3.00 dollars and \$4.00 dollars.

Do you know how much they charge me now?  
\$10.00 and something for so many cubic feet of gas.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Ms. Smith, could you please start to conclude, because we want to make sure that we get everyone, before we have to leave today.

MS. SMITH: Well, all I have to say is that, I just wanted to let you know how one single person felt that is not totally poor, but almost totally poor, because of the rise in utility bills.

So, I say, do not raise the utility bills. Thank you.

(Audience Applauding)

MRS. McFARKAS: My name is Marilyn McFarkas. I am a resident of Ward 11, but I grew up in Ward 7. For one, I would like it known that I have not been sworn in.

---oOo---

**MRS. MARILYNN McFARKAS,**

having been first duly sworn,

testified as follows:

---oOo---

**SWORN STATEMENT**

---oOo---

**BY MRS. MCFARKAS:**

I have a 31 year old college graduate from a very reputable school, and I would not have known about this particular costs action, had I not had an interests in Ward 7 meetings.

So, just by sheer interests by coming to the Ward 7 meetings and being in another Ward, I had no idea about what was going on.

That means that this information is not being readily available to the public in Ward 11, number one. And I read the paper, the Cleveland Plain Dealer. It is okay by me, but there was no information about this meeting, so, the public is not completely clued-in.

In this "Call to Action," it says that now is the time to voice your concerns for PUCO's proposed telephone bills that will allow local telephone companies to increase charges for

Caller ID and second line, and allow other increases to occur, like, call waiting and call forwarding, all without any telephone companies application. I oppose that completely.

Number one, I called Ameritech some months ago, because I moved back to my parents home and I got a second line. I had some concerns about a package that I had. So, I called to get the services itemized in terms of the package. And I was informed that ultimately, it is easier to stay with the package, than to try to delete the area services.

I also have access to AOL, so, Internet access to initialize, to get onto the Internet, which I am quite sure you know we have access lines.

Now, I was informed that you could incur service charges from your local company, as well as your long distance company. So, local means Ameritech.

Ameritech, also has the DSL service.

Now, that package, at one time, it was \$35.99 at first. Now, I understand it is relatively less. The last time I called it was \$80.00 or \$90.00 some dollars.

So, if the young people who are on the Internet –

We are talking about this divide, in terms of technology in the black community. For those of us who have

access to the Internet, to the World Wide Web, they are being charged.

Now, Ameritech is making a profit by having DSL. They are making a profit by, actually, helping to initialize those who get on the Internet.

So, you are incurring a profit. So, I do not understand why you have to increase the tax on these charges to Caller ID.

And, if I am not mistaken, I was wondering how many people in this room have Caller ID already, and, I guess, just about everybody.

I know a whole bunch of, and I could say, black folks who are poor people who have call waiting and call forwarding, but that is in your house. You also walk around with cell phones and we have pagers.

So, things, like, DSL, you know, because you can have your pager with e-mail and all of these other services and your cell phone and your e-mail, and Internet service, so, you are being charged.

Sometimes you be charged. You are not just talking about your home phone. You are talking about other phones and other services. I am completely opposed it.

My question to Ameritech and it bothers me that not a Representative from the PUCO is here.

Now, I know that I have a superior, you know.

So, that would mean that I represent so many people and so even if they could not make it, can't they send a representative.

Now, a Lobbyist is great, but ultimately, some of them lobby, they lobby for those who pay those bills. So, a lobbyist from Ameritech is nice, but that does not necessarily help me.

My concern is too, because I completely am opposed to this, in terms of Ameritech, I have been looking at the demographics of the African American in terms of the corporation structure of America.

I mean, the percentage of minorities who are with Ameritech and I am not talking about people who are cut from the service, but, if you are going to increase charges for poor people and, then, you have me drive out to Babitt to make my payment, when I could go Downtown and make it at the bank, why don't Ameritech consider putting a payment center -- Since they are going to increase charges to poor people.

Why don't they consider putting a payment center in the higher residential areas, since we are dealing with welfare reform in some of the Wards that was mentioned to have the highest rate of un-employment.

Let's start with Ward 7, Ward 5, Ward 3, Ward 6 and Ward 8. Consider that.

I mean, if you are going to increase my bill and the charges on my bill, you need to hire some people into the payment center in place where most people would be greatly affected and who will support the tax base in this City.

Also, if you are going to do things like that, you need to consider paying internship for students who come out of these poor neighborhoods, who are walking around with cell phones attached to their ear and consider doing some civic things, like adopting schools and some tutoring programs in these neighborhoods, where you are going to increase -

(Audience Applauding)

MRS. McFARKAS: -- the services to their moms, their daddies and to their grandparents. But if I am not mistaken, a large percentage of grandparents are taking care of their grandchildren.

(Audience Applauding)

MRS. McFARKAS: -- And there is no legislation in place to help us support them.

So, they are getting hit in the pocket. They take care of their grand children, because their children cannot and they are not receiving the social service benefits for that.

So, I feel like if you are going to have an increase on my phone charge for Caller ID, second line, call waiting, call forwarding, the stuff what most poor have used, but we shouldn't. But it is easier to use them in a package than to try and itemize them out, which I try. You need to offer benefits to those in the community.

So, since PUCO is not here to take this information as a Lobbyist for Ameritech, you can, and I appreciate that.

Thank you.

(Audience Applauding)

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Just for the late comers, I am not the Lobbyist.

(Laughter from the Audience)

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: I am Bill Gruber and I am representing City Council here tonight.

MRS. HIGHSMITH: My name is Linda Highsmith. I live in Ward 7. My address is 1916 East 71<sup>st</sup> Street, and I have not been sworn in.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Would you swear her in please.



---oOo---

**MRS. LINDA HIGHSMITH,**

being first duly sworn, further  
testified as follows:

---oOo---

**SWORN STATEMENT**

---oOo---

**BY MRS. HIGHSMITH:**

I would just like to register my opposition to the  
increase that has been proposed by PUCO.

Now, I would also like to say that I don't know how I did  
it, but I was able to, a couple of years ago, to get rid of all these  
services. I no longer have it, because it is too expensive for me.

So, like, I say, I don't know how I did it and I know  
other people may not want to do that, but I was able to do it.  
That's all I have to say.

(Audience Applauding)

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: The people in the next  
row. Anyone else in that row that would like to speak? Anyone in  
the back row or the last two rows on this side? Anyone going down  
the side here to my left, along the walls? Any of the people here  
want to speak in that one row?

Is there anyone else in the room, then, that has not spoken, that would like to do a Sworn Statement or an un-Sworn Statement on the record?

MR. PATTON: Bill.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Wait, wait. There is one other. I am sorry.

MRS. TURNER: I have not been sworn in.  
My name is Dottie Thurman and I live in Ward 7.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Why don't you come up and say your name again, so, that the Court Reporter can get it. Then, you can do your statement.

MRS. TURNER: Okay. I will.

---oOo---

**MRS. DOTTIE TURNER,**  
being first duly sworn, further  
testified as follows:

---oOo---

**SWORN STATEMENT**

---oOo---

**BY MRS. TURNER:**

My name is Dottie Turner and I live in  
Ward 7 at 3215 Marvin Avenue. I am opposed to a raise in the  
telephone rates and that is all that I have to say, because I live off

of a fixed income myself and I do not have a lot of money to be paying all these telephone bills and these big bills, so, I oppose.

(Audience Applauding)

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Before the Representative from Ameritech would like to speak, is there anyone else in the room that would like to speak on the record?

I will give you a chance if anyone wants to make a statement off the record, but on the record?

MR. PATTON: Mr. Gruber, I do. (Raised hand).

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Mr. Patton.

MR. PATTON: Right.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Why don't you, also, state your name again, in case there are people who came late and do not know who you are.

---oOo---

**MR. CHARLES PATTON, ESQ.**

being first duly sworn, further  
testified as follows:

---oOo---

**SWORN STATEMENT**

---oOo---

MR. PATTON: Good evening everybody.

THE AUDIENCE: Good evening.

MR. PATTON: My name is Charles Patton,

P-a-t-t-o-n. Technically, I am not involved.

My title is Director of the External Affairs with Ameritech. I am from Cleveland. I graduated from Kennedy. I have a Law Degree from Howard. I worked for the Public Utilities Commission of the State of New York for five years, so, I have some experience in Utility Regulatory work. I served on City Council with Fannie for eight years. Fannie was very gracious in saying, you welcomed me when I came here. I appreciated that. It's nice to get a lesson from Fannie.

(Laughter from the Audience)

MR. PATTON: Now, after having known Fannie for as long as I have known her and Fannie has many, many times said,

that she likes to teach at her Ward club. She likes to share knowledge, and so do I.

Fannie, let me back digress for one moment. Today is Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>. Does anybody know what Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> is all about?

What is the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution?

(UNKNOWN SPEAKER) Freed the slaves.

MR. PATTON: The 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment freed the slaves and you should all know that. Thirteen Colonies overthrew Britain. There were 13 people at the last supper.

Now, somebody said all of those events were unlucky and it was unlucky for the person or the group on the other side.

(Audience Responding)

MR. PATTON: All of those events were real lucky. Don't let anybody tell you that the Number 13 is unlucky. Don't let anybody tell you that. Those red necks in the confederacy are the ones who said they were unlucky. Those people who were against Jesus said that they were unlucky. Those red coats said it was unlucky. So, that is my little history lesson for today. Don't let nobody tell you.

And I knew that there were only one or two people in this room that knew the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment freed the slaves. And we

should all know that and they did not teach it in the schools.

Don't let them get away with not teaching that stuff to our kids.

Now, I want to let you know something about me. The rate proposal, the alternative drawn proposal was created by the Utility Commission. Not recently. This goes back a number of years and the persons in this room from the Ohio Consumers Counsel know that. This is not new. This is an on-going fact. I was downtown today. I saw five white X-O Trucks between Lakeside and Euclid on 9<sup>th</sup> Street. X-O is the competitor of Ameritech. X-O is only Downtown, going into some big high rise buildings, soliciting customers downtown. X-O is a phone company. X-O does not provide lifeline service in the neighborhood. None of the other phone companies, such as Pro Con -- And there are 57 phone companies who have applied for licences to do business in the State of Ohio.

None of them, except Cincinnati Bell and Ameritech have to provide the USA service plan to residential customers.

Now, the alternative group that were proposed by the Utilities Commission and this goes back more than 15 years, to the beginning of deregulation, there were some rules. The rules were modified. The rules were modified again and, now, they are getting modified again -- will freeze your basic phone rate at the same level through the year of 2003 through 2006 or, maybe, in 15 or 20

more years until the rules change again. So, that is what our first basic premise is.

Now, if you ran a grocery store and somebody told you that rates were frozen on soft drinks, you could not make more on that, but you could raise rates on candy, beer and wine, and if those were the rules, then, those were the rules. They do not do that. This is a regulated environment.

The Commission wants to promote competition and there is competition. You may get a knock on your door from somebody that says, we can sell you a basic phone service and give you this package deal. The package deal from Ameritech will cost us \$75.00 a month.

The package deal with Pro Con is \$52.00 right now. The same package deal. The same phone service, but it is only one wire coming into your house. So, that package deal is our competition, and that's all right.

What we want for Ameritech is for a level playing field. Everybody playing by the same rules, because on the USA Lifeline Program, we are losing money, and that's okay. That is the way the rules are set up. You lose. So, as they change, they change.

Now, I heard everybody's comments today and I made notes. Nobody wants to hear this. Everybody has about the same complaint. I heard, because I was listening. Basic Phone Rate.

The basic phone rate will stay the same. The basic phone rate has not gone up for how long?

MR. SERIO: For at least seven years.

MR. PATTON: I did not want to lie about it. Ohio Consumer Counsel, he knows. For at least seven years, your phone rates has not gone up.

Basic phone rate.

Now, your Caller ID phone rate has gone down over the last several weeks. It has.

DSL, now that is different story. And it is complicated and this industry is complicated. It is truly complicated. I have had business people giving me pointers, saying, they know a company in D.C., in North Carolina and Orlando who already has DSL. They already have high speed access all over those communities.

Why don't we have it here?

The Federal Communications Commission and Ameritech said that we do not have it. We invested a lot of money in our community to expand service for high speed Internet access and we do not have it yet. It is embarrassing that we cannot provide it to our schools, and we are under the Federal mandate too. But those copper cables are expensive. Those fiber net cables are expensive.



We cannot even connect it for the foreseeable future for basic phone rates and if X-O, that phone company that is right Downtown with an X and an O on it, continues to take all of our best customers Downtown, we are going to continue to lose money.

Now, I thank everybody who supported these two levies. We need to see our kids be able to compete on the same level as the kids in other neighborhoods who has Internet access, but we have got to be ready for that. When I say be ready for that, does not mean telephone provided. I mean, you have got to pay for something.

Now, like I started off by saying, the Utilities Commission is better with their proposal and I cannot speak for the Utilities Commission. I just wanted to give the residents who were here a thank you for coming. Thank you. You are to be commended for staying and I started off talking about Mrs. Lewis providing information to her community. She says that all the time, "That is what we are suppose to do."

Now, I am not telling you not to be against any of these rates. That is not what I am saying. I just wanted to give you some information and let you know some more about the story.

We need to stay involved in the information, simply because this really passed us by. We are waiting in Cleveland. We are late.

You have this some place else in the sun belt where those neighborhoods are growing and the population is growing, they have a super highway faster than we do. We are late. I just pray that by the time that we get DSL before they go throughout the community, so that no other technology is here that makes it obsolete, and that may happen.

So, Mrs. Lewis, once again, thank you. I do not know what else I could say. It is a pleasure always to see you and I will be around after the meeting in case somebody has some questions. That was just a little information Mrs. Lewis.

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: I will say that we will go off the record for now.

(An off the record discussion was held)

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Mrs. Lewis, is going to close out the meeting tonight.

Mr. Serio?

MR. SERIO: Yes.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Did you want to say something on the record?

---oOo---

**MR. JOSEPH SERIO, ESQ.**

being first duly sworn, further  
testified as follows:

---oOo---

**SWORN STATEMENT**

---oOo---

MR. SERIO: Yes, if I could make a statement on the  
record.

My name is Joe Serio and I am an Attorney for the  
Ohio Consumers Counsel. I appreciate Mr. Patton coming here  
tonight.

We had public meetings in Akron and we had notified  
the company and they chose not to come that night, and the fact  
that you are here tonight and taking the time and the kind of  
abuse that you had to -- I respect that fact that you came, because  
it is not an easy thing to do.

You made some statements on the record, that I feel  
we may need to respond to just from our perspective to set the  
record state.

Three simple facts:

1). X-O is in Downtown, Cleveland, but they are not  
competing for residential customers and our fundamental position  
is that until there is competition for residential customers, the  
service that residential customers take should not be deregulated.

2). You have indicated that Ameritech is losing money, because of what these competitors are doing.

The fact remains -

MR. PATTON: That was not my statement.

MS. WILSON: No, I said that.

MR. SERIO: Oh, I am sorry. The fact remains that since Ameritech entered its Alt. Reg. Agreement in 1993, the company has averaged between 25 and 30 percent return on equity, per year.

That means that they are making 25 to 30 percent return on their investments. That is an investment that not many businesses can say that they have been able to accomplish over that period of time.

MS. SMITH: Was that this year or last year or the year before?

MR. WILSON: That was last year's number, Ms. Smith.

The company made over 20 percent return on equity and they have averaged almost 30 percent over the last seven years. We have documented that and we have put it in the record in our comments.

3). The third point is the reason that you have not had an increase and the reason that some of your services have gone down in price, since the Alt. Reg. case, is because under the current Alternative Regulation Plan, our office and other people that intervened in the case were allowed to participate and we ended up with a negotiated settlement that the company agreed to, we agreed to and numerous other parties agreed to.

Under the new rules, we were not granted opportunity to intervene in the case and get the same benefits that people enjoy today.

Those are some of the fundamental reasons that we opposed it and that is the argument that we will be making to the Commission.

Anyway, I appreciate your coming, because it shows a lot of guts to come to a meeting like this knowing that you are not going to be supported, because people are going to be upset with what the company is doing. But that is the reason that we have taken the position that we have.

MS. WILSON: Let me just make a point -

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Why don't you -

MS. SMITH: Let me just make a correction for him for the residential service that you said that Ameritech was not - There are apartment buildings in East Cleveland and Cleveland that when a person moves in, they have to accept the telephone company that provides the service to that particular building and it does not necessarily have to be - it can be a competitor.

So, I just wanted to add that.

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Before

Mrs. Lewis closes out the meeting here, I would just like to thank everyone.

We had about 60 or more people who came and helped out tonight, to speak or listen. There were 38 people who did speak and I appreciate all of you who came and thank you very much and this record will be transcribed and sent to the Public Utilities Commission.

Now, Mrs. Lewis, if you would like to close out this meeting.

Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: Let me say something to my dear colleague over here.

Do you know your political address?

MR. PATTON: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: What is it?

MR. PATTON: Where I vote from?

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: Your political address.

MR. PATTON: (Laughter).

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: That is all I am asking.

See, all of us are ignorant to something. All of us are ignorant to something.

I am politics. There is only one person in Cleveland better in politics than me and that is Lenny B. Powell. Okay.

Now, I state my record against anybody.

Now, politics is no more than how your government works for you. That is what politics is.

Now, I became a Councilwoman, because I got tired of living in an ignorant Ward. I got tired of living in a Ward where people did not know what was going on. There are people that did not know what eminent domain means.

I did not know what it meant until they dug across the street from me. But when this stuff hits you, then, you learn. You know, when you are between a rock and a hard place, that is when you learn the most. When somebody hits you across the head, you get a clear understanding of what is going on.

So, ever since, I have been a Councilwoman, my job has been to inform people.

Now, all I can do is to set up a process and ask people to come and if they do not come, that is their business. But one thing I will do. I am a majority by myself.

Okay.

(Laughter from the Audience)

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: I do not need nobody else. I am a majority by myself. The point of it is, is that our folks need

to know and understand what it is that legislators do, because nothing can happen unless a legislator does it and you have got to be concerned with the legislators and who they are, because you do not have time to be looking up and down their backs.

Okay. And half the time, because the people in Ward 7, yet, do not understand what my job is.

You know, getting up trees, dogs and cats and, you know, that is not my job.

My job is a Legislative one and it is to keep the politics to the people, so, that you can understand why we are not only fighting for yourself, but to help me while I am Downtown to do it. That is the purpose of this meeting.

Nobody is going to put anything over on this Ward and get away with it. I was so angry down at that meeting that they held down at the -- Building at 2:00 o'clock in the day and had the audacity and the nerve to not have anywhere to park and Clarence Rogers who is on the PUCO Committee so that he would start it in Cleveland, sat there and said I am not answering no questions.

Now, the thing of it is, when you have got information, you can make decisions. This Ward now has some information. Is 60 people here tonight?

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Yes.



to know and understand what it is that legislators do, because nothing can happen unless a legislator does it and you have got to be concerned with the legislators and who they are, because you do not have time to be looking up and down their backs.

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Now, the thing of it is, when you have got information, you can make decisions. This Ward now has some information. Is 60 people here tonight?

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: So, for every one person, they knows, that is 10. So, 10 x 60 is what?

THE AUDIENCE: 600.

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: That's how many people you have informed tonight and, then, in some cases, Lawrence got more than that over there where he is.

Do you understand what I am saying?

So, the information is key.

Now, there is something that we are going to do with this right now, I believe.

When I left the PUCO Committee, I said, Mr. Rogers, I said, "Do we have time to get this stuff in?" I was told, "No. The hearings are over with. You do not have time to get them in. It is done."

Now, I do not care whether it is Ameritech or who it is. If it is my mama and it gets in the way of progress for us, it has to go.

I do not have no front, particularly, when it comes to people in Ward 7.

I do not dislike nobody. I do not hate nobody, but don't do nothing in here that is going to stop progress for us.

So, when I asked about the hearings, I think I called -- Who did I call? Consumers Counsel and I asked about

information and trying to find out what we could do and I got a hold of --

I think I put it in a piece of legislation when Ruby called me and this is how we got this thing done.

There is something that we can do, okay?

At Ameritech, poor people are the ones who are buying this. Poor people are the ones who they took off of welfare. Poor people are the ones who they are raising the charges on. Every time they get ready to do something, -- Didn't they just get tax school votes.

Now, that the taxes are gone, they hit us for some 25 years. We are the ones who do it. So, if we can do it, we can undo it.

MS. WILSON: That's right.

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: And it is just a matter of how long. I do not know what we can do. There have been a lot of suggestions tonight, but I do not have no compunction as to whether it is put together, but I am going to leave it to our legal person to tell us what we can do in order to make our voices even more known.

And let me tell you, it was not by accident tonight that we had two Council people here. There are 21 Council people who it involves. This is the first meeting of a series of meetings

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: Okay. On our heads.

So, we have to do something. I am not one to sit by and just let things happen. I do not believe that there is nothing under the sun that we cannot do something about with God's help.

We can sit and listen to something about those liquor permits over on 82nd Street and --

(Response from the Audience)

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: We have Ward clubs. We have people in other Wards, now, calling and asking us how we did. Not only that, but you have got two more round of precincts going on around here and when you start something, it catches on. Then, we have to be prepared to help people, then, let's do that.

Now, I do not know what you can do, but whatever it is, let's put it all together and let's get it done, because it is about each one of us being able to live a much better life.

And, DSL, I signed up for DSL when you all invited us over there to that dinner. You all told us a lie.

(Laughter from the Audience)

MR. PATTON: Did you get it?

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: No. I do not want it. It is too much.

(Laughter from the Audience)

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: And, you know, \$45.00, and I cannot even get it in my house, you know. So, my grand kids can sit there and wait until it come up.

(Audience Responding)

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: And I am not about trying to live like the Joneses. You know what I am saying?

So, the thing of it is, is that, we have a fight on our hands here, because the sewer rate has gone up. The water rate is going up. All the utilities is going up and we are just going to have to do something with this.

I am very grateful for Ms. DeMore, the President and the Vice President tonight, and to the Treasurer, they are all sitting here together, to relinquish this meeting tonight for this purpose, because they did not have to, but because I asked them to, they did. I think it was Mary Webb that did that. I really appreciate all of you.

Like, I am saying, we called this meeting together tonight and, you know, I am very grateful that you all responded, because we would have looked bad having this meeting tonight and during our meeting, nobody said anything. That would look bad for us.

So, I am really grateful that all of you came out.

Now, when the cause comes down for whatever we are going to do, if you cannot come, send somebody. If you cannot send nobody, pray for it. But there is something that you can do. God Bless You. Thank you for being here.

This is a young lady here who works for City Council. She is one of the –

THE COURT REPORTER: Legislative Assistant.

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: -- Legislative Assistant down at Council who is working as our Court Reporter tonight, and I said to the President today, she is going to get paid, if I have to pay her myself. So, I just wanted to thank her for coming out here.

(Laughter from the Audience)

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: I want to thank the gentleman in the back and the people in the back. What t.v. station is that right there?

NEWS TECHNICIAN: Channel 50.

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: Channel what?

NEWS TECHNICIAN: Channel 50, the City of Cleveland.

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: Oh, okay. So, how are we going to get a copy of this?

NEWS TECHNICIAN: We will get a copy to you and if there is anybody you know who wants a copy, then, we will bring it.

COUNCILWOMAN LEWIS: Okay. Real good.

Come here Keisha. I want you all to meet my new Assistant. This young lady here, I remember when she was born.

(Audience Applauding)

PRESIDING OFFICER GRUBER: We can go off the record now.

(Whereupon, the hearing concluded at 9:15 p.m.)

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IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand  
and affixed my seal at the Office of the Cleveland City Council,  
this 30th day of July, 2001.

x Donald S. Smith

My Commission Expires:  
December, 2004.



**DONNA S. SMITH**  
NOTARY PUBLIC, STATE OF OHIO  
Recorded in Cuyahoga County  
My Comm. Expires Dec., 2004