

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

C.S.S.B. 253
By: Barrientos
Economic Development
3-20-97
Committee Report (Substituted)

DIGEST

Currently, telecommunications utilities may switch a customer's service, without authorization from the customer, in a practice called slamming. As a result of slamming, consumers may lose important service features, receive lower quality service, or be charged higher rates. Consumers may also be denied the basic right to choose their telecommunications service. This bill would make it illegal for telecommunications utilities to switch a customer's service without customer authorization.

PURPOSE

As proposed, C.S.S.B. 253 makes it illegal for telecommunications utilities to process a request from different telecommunications utilities to serve a customer without customer authorization.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is granted to the Public Utility Commission in SECTION 1 (Section 3.312, Article 1446c-0, V.T.C.S.) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Title IIIG, Article 1446c-0, V.T.C.S., by adding Sections 3.312 and 3.313, as follows:

Sec. 3.312. TELECOMMUNICATIONS UTILITY SELECTION RULES. Provides that it is the policy of this state to ensure that all customers are protected from the unauthorized switching of a telecommunications utility selected by the customer. Requires the Public Utility Commission (commission) to adopt certain nondiscriminatory and competitively neutral rules to implement this section, no later than November 1, 1997.

Sec. 3.313. NOTICE OF IDENTITY OF INTEREXCHANGE CARRIER. Requires a local exchange company to print on the first page of each bill sent to a customer, the customer's primary interexchange carrier where the local exchange company provides billing services for the primary interexchange carrier. Authorizes the commission, for good cause, to waive this requirement in exchanges served by incumbent local exchange companies serving 31,000 access lines or less. Sets forth other requirements for the customer's bill.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 3.051(c), Article 1446c-0, V.T.C.S., to make conforming changes.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 1997.

SECTION 4. Emergency clause.

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE CHANGES

SECTION 1.

Deletes proposed SECTION 1. Adds new SECTION 1, Title IIIG, Article 1446c-0, V.T.C.S., by adding Sections 3.312 and 3.313, regarding telecommunications utility selection rules and notice of identity of interexchange carriers.

SECTION 2.

Deletes proposed SECTION 2. Adds new SECTION 2, Section 3.051(c), Article 1446c-0, V.T.C.S., to make conforming changes.

SECTIONS 3 and 4.

Adds SECTION 3 and 4, regarding the effective date and the emergency clause.