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# **The Consumer Information Bureau**

## **A Report to The Commission**

**January 17, 2002**



**Consumer  
Information  
Bureau**



# Consumer Information Bureau

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- Guiding principle for a healthy and competitive marketplace:
  - ➔ Information
  - ➔ Awareness
- Everything we do is about consumers



# Consumer Information Bureau

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## FCC Charge 1934: The Landscape

- “A rapid, efficient, nationwide, and worldwide wire and radio communication service”
  - Telephones
  - Mass Media
- No competition, no choices
- No choices, no need for information





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## FCC 2002: The Landscape

- Strong push to competition in communications
  - ILECs And CLECs
  - Analog phones and digital phones
  - DSL and cable Internet access
- Increased competition, multiple choices
- Multiple choices, greater need for education and information





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## 2001: A Year of Accomplishments

- Successful work of CAMS
  - Handled over 1 million consumer
    - ◆ Calls
    - ◆ Letters
    - ◆ Emails
  - English and Spanish IVR
- Zero-balance of backlogged informal consumer complaints





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## 2001: A Year of Accomplishments

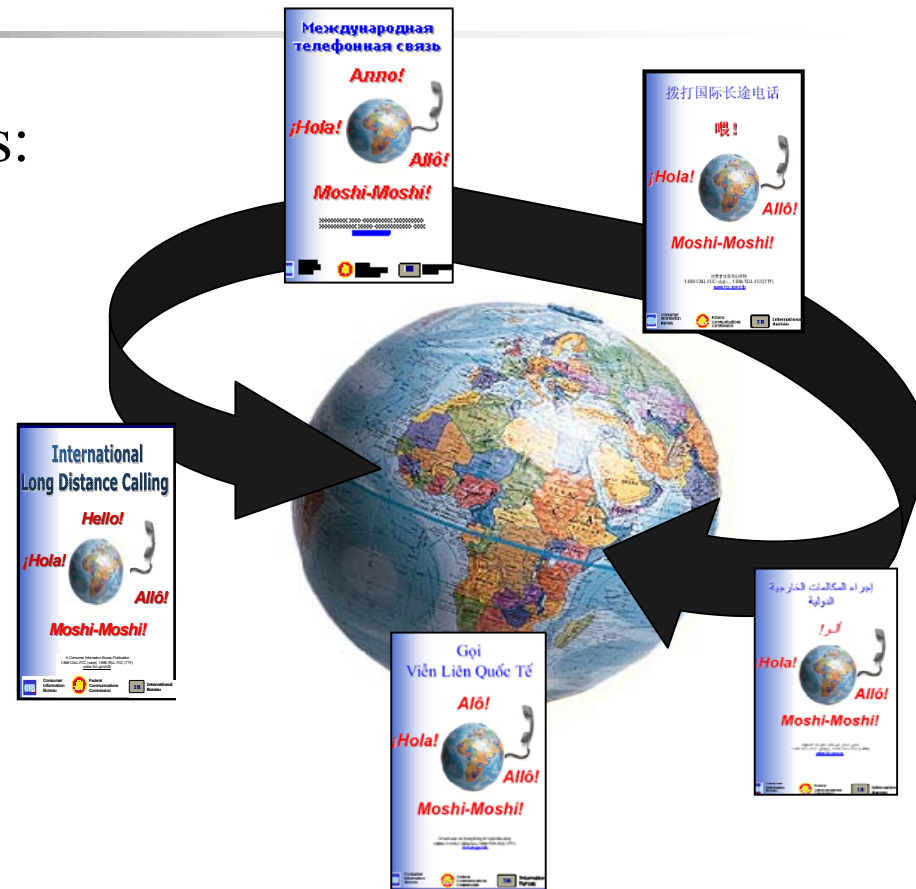
- National outreach on key issues
  - International Long Distance Brochure
  - Collaboration with International Bureau



# Consumer Information Bureau

- Produced in 13 different languages:

- Arabic
- Simplified Chinese
- English
- French
- German
- Hebrew
- Hindi
- Japanese
- Korean
- Russian
- Spanish
- Tagalog
- Vietnamese



Consumer  
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## 2001: A Year of Accomplishments

- National outreach on key issues
  - Detariffing
  - Telemarketing
  - Slamming
    - ◆ 35 states, plus DC and Puerto Rico






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Federal Communications Commission

## Consumer Facts



### UNDERSTANDING YOUR PHONE BILL

**Charges, Changes and Contacts:  
The FCC's Three Cs for Consumer Protection**

Consumer confusion over telephone bills has significantly contributed to the growth of slamming (changing a consumer's telephone provider without his/her permission), cramming (adding charges to a consumer's bill for services he/she did not authorize), and other types of telecommunications fraud. To help consumers detect fraud, the FCC has asked phone companies to simplify their bills so that their customers can easily understand what they are paying for and how much they are paying.

## FCC Consumer Alert

Consumer Information Bureau  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW ♦ Washington, DC 20554  
1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) voice  
1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) TTY  
[www.fcc.gov/cib](http://www.fcc.gov/cib)

### New "Single Bill" Fees on Phone Bills


If you are billed for both local and long distance service on one phone bill, you may soon be charged a fee by your long distance provider for this convenience.

Many long distance companies are now adding a "single bill fee" to the phone bills of customers who are billed for long distance service through their local telephone companies.

The fee is not mandated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). It is not an FCC charge.

Federal Communications Commission

## Consumer Facts



### When Your Telephone Service Is Switched Without Your Permission – "Slamming"

"Slamming" is the illegal practice of changing a consumer's telephone service without permission. New consumer protection rules created by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) provide a remedy if you've been slammed.





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## 2001: A Year in Review

- Disability Rights Office (DRO)
  - Policy-making activities
    - ◆ Relay Services
    - ◆ Closed Captioning
    - ◆ Hearing Aid Compatibility





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## 2001: A Year In Review

- Outreach to groups
  - ➔ Consumer/Disability Telecommunications Advisory Committee
  - ➔ Tribal Governments
  - ➔ Seniors
  - ➔ Disability Issues





# Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau\*

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**A New Organization Built  
To Meet The Challenge**

**\* Upon finalization of necessary approvals**



# Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau

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## Intergovernmental Affairs

### Key Functions:

- Strategic coordination with government organizations
  - ➔ Federal
  - ➔ State
  - ➔ Local
- Communication
  - ➔ Internal FCC
  - ➔ External FCC
- Establish information flow





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## Intergovernmental Affairs

### Key Focus Areas:

- Broadband Deployment
- Local and State Government Advisory Committee (LSGAC)
- Homeland Security
- LifeLine/LinkUp
- Build strategic partnerships





# Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau

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- Consumer Inquiries & Complaints Division
  - Answers to telecommunications questions
  - Consumer dispute resolution
  - Washington and Gettysburg Consumer Centers
- Information Access & Privacy Office
  - Handles over 50% of agency Congressionals
  - Processes due diligence requests





# Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau

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- Policy Division
  - ➔ Competition Policy
  - ➔ Consumer-oriented rulemaking
    - ◆ Analysis Branch
      - Providing trend analysis
    - ◆ Publications Branch
      - Consumer fact sheets and brochures
- Disability Rights Office
  - ➔ Policy Focus







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- Consumer Affairs and Outreach Division
  - ➔ “Beyond the Beltway” approach
  - ➔ All telecom consumers
  - ➔ ITTI 2002
- Reference Information Center





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## Leveraging Technology

- Make information easily available
  - ➔ 24/7/365
  - ➔ Coast to coast
  - ➔ 499 Carrier Locator Form
  - ➔ State and National Action Plan (SNAP)
  - ➔ Consumer Information Management System (CIMS)
- Utilize the Web
  - ➔ Web-based applications
  - ➔ Repository of information
  - ➔ Online forms
  - ➔ Disability-accessible
  - ➔ Spanish-language materials available





# Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau

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**A new bureau built to meet the challenge--  
ready and able to provide information  
to support a healthy, competitive  
marketplace for consumers.**