

Tristan Walsh

To: Melodie Wilterdink
Subject: RE: in support of House Bill 20

From: Arnie Mckinnon <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, February 16, 2025 8:04 AM
To: Melodie Wilterdink <Melodie.Wilterdink@akleg.gov>
Subject: in support of House Bill 20

I am writing this email in support of House Bill 20 in the House Labor & Commerce Committee.

I believe this bill should be voted on and passed for several reasons.

I have been a customer of GCI for 30 years, it was never a hardship for them to send me a paper bill in that time, it's part of the cost of doing business and always has been.

These charges have been deemed as discriminatory in several other states New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia to name a few.

This is a coercion by these companies under the guise of "being environmentally friendly," when in my opinion, the truth of the matter is they want to increase their company profits. GCI advertises that they are an Alaskan company but had no issue closing their Alaska call centers and outsourced them to Mexico and the Philippines to the detriment of their employees and the Alaskan economy. They care not for Alaska or Alaskans, as advertised.

If this practice is allowed to continue, where does it stop?

Most utilities have a monopoly, we don't have the option of shopping around for a company that doesn't charge for paper bills or if we feel they have unfair billing practices. They should be reined in, and held to a different standard because of that.

If a doctors office decided to charge me for paper bills, I'd simply find another doctor. We don't have many, if any, options in this case.

T-Mobile were recently attempting to charge their customers for their paper bills until the threat of a Class Action Lawsuit, made them change course. Its obviously a practice that's unpopular for consumers.

"..Another problem here is that there is still a segment of users, notably the poor and elderly, who may rely on a mobile phone yet don't have Internet access at home. And today, there is a segment of people that may even have computers but not the ability to print. Thus archiving the bills can be difficult to impossible. Worse still is the fact that without a paper bill you're forced to pay the bill online.

This might not seem like a big deal, but consider that to pay via online you need to link your bank account to the carrier. While millions of people do this everyday, there is the concern by some that this opens yet another door to your digital information. Imagine hackers with access to your account with the ability to take all your money? This is an unlikely scenario, but it is worth mentioning that unlike if the bank is robbed, your money

isn't technically stolen. The case might not be so straight forward if a hacker transfers your money out of your account.

And some users complain that paying online means yet another set of passwords to remember, and worse that unlike having a paper reminder to pay that bill, it might be very easy to overlook an e-mail and thus face late fees..."

You here today have the option of voting to prevent this sort of practice from continuing, I strongly urge you to do so. I'm sure all your constituents would applaud you for being on the "right side" of this issue, putting money back into their own pockets and not these greed driven corporations.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Regards

Arnie McKinnon