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2011-2012 Regular Sessions

I N   S E N A T E

(PREFILED)

January 5, 2011

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Introduced by Sen. MAZIARZ -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Energy and Telecommunications

AN ACT to amend the public service law, in relation to utility service call centers

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

- 1     Section 1. Section 65 of the public service law is amended by adding a  
2     new subdivision 14 to read as follows:
- 3     14. (A) EVERY TELECOMMUNICATION CORPORATION AND THEIR SUBSIDIARIES  
4     FURNISHING TRADITIONAL LANDLINE TELEPHONE SERVICE, FIBER OPTIC SERVICE,  
5     VOICE OVER INTERNET PROTOCOL (VOIP), DATA CIRCUITS, CABLE OR INTERNET  
6     SERVICES SHALL PROVIDE CALL CENTER SERVICE ASSISTANCE INCLUDING, BUT NOT  
7     LIMITED TO OPERATOR SERVICES, DIRECTORY ASSISTANCE BUREAUS AND CALL  
8     COMPLETION SERVICES FOR THE FOLLOWING:
- 9        (1) DETERMINING CUSTOMER FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY;
- 10       (2) TAKING REQUESTS FOR NEW OR ADDITIONAL SERVICES, INCLUDING, BUT NOT  
11       LIMITED TO, EMERGENCY SERVICE, COMPLETING ASSISTANCE WITH DIALING, USING  
12       CALLING CARDS, CONNECTING COLLECT CALLS, BUSY LINE VERIFICATION OR RELAY  
13       CENTERS FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED, PROVIDING REQUESTED LOCAL AND NATIONAL  
14       TELEPHONE NUMBERS, REVERSE NUMBER SEARCHES AND TAKING REQUESTS FOR AND  
15       COMPLETING THE PUBLISHING AND NON-PUBLISHING OF A TELEPHONE NUMBER, AND  
16       PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO PAYPHONE CUSTOMERS;
- 17       (3) DETERMINING DEPOSIT REQUIRED OR BILLING RATE;
- 18       (4) PREPARING INSTALLATION AND REPAIR SERVICE ORDERS AND OBTAINING  
19       ACCESS TO SUBSCRIBER'S PREMISES;
- 20       (5) EXPLAINING COMPANY RATES, REGULATIONS, POLICIES, PROCEDURES,  
21       EQUIPMENT AND COMMON PRACTICES;
- 22       (6) INVESTIGATING TROUBLE ORDER FORMS AND INITIATING HIGH BILL INVE-  
23       TIGATIONS;

EXPLANATION--Matter in ITALICS (underscored) is new; matter in brackets  
[ ] is old law to be omitted.

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1 (7) HANDLING PAYMENT AND OTHER CREDIT ARRANGEMENTS SUCH AS OBTAINING  
2 DEPOSITS, FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND PAYMENT PLANS; AND

3 (8) AIDING CUSTOMERS WITH INTERNAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

4 (B) NO TELECOMMUNICATION CORPORATION SHALL CLOSE A CALL CENTER OR  
5 OTHER FACILITY PROVIDING THE CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE SET FORTH IN PARAGRAPH  
6 (A) OF THIS SUBDIVISION OR RELOCATE SUCH CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE TO ANOTHER  
7 AREA OF NEW YORK STATE OR OUTSIDE OF NEW YORK STATE WITHOUT NOTICE AND  
8 HEARING BEFORE THE COMMISSION. HOWEVER, AT NO TIME SHALL A TELECOMMUNI-  
9 CATION CORPORATION PERMANENTLY TRANSFER MORE THAN .7 PERCENT OF JOBS  
10 FROM ANY CALL CENTER DESCRIBED ABOVE TO ANOTHER AREA OF NEW YORK STATE  
11 OR OUTSIDE OF THE STATE.

12 (C) THIS SUBDIVISION SHALL NOT APPLY TO THE COLLECTION OF DEBT WHEREBY  
13 UTILITY COMPANY POLICY SUCH DEBT IS DIRECTED TO A COLLECTION AGENCY OR  
14 SIMILAR SERVICE COMPANIES.

15 S 2. This act shall take effect on the sixtieth day after it shall  
16 have become a law; provided, however, that the public service commission  
17 is immediately authorized and directed to take any and all actions,  
18 including but not limited to the promulgation of any rules or regu-  
19 lations necessary to implement the provisions of this act on such effec-  
20 tive date.