S T A T E O F N E W Y O R K

526

2015-2016 Regular Sessions

I N S E N A T E

(PREFILED)

January 7, 2015

Introduced by Sen. PARKER -- 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 and the general business law, in relation to requiring companies to allow victims of domestic violence to cancel contracts when there is a permanent order of protection in place

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

Section 1. Section 91 of the public service law is amended by adding a new subdivision 8 to read as follows:

8. EVERY LOCAL EXCHANGE TELEPHONE CORPORATION, AS DEFINED IN THIS CHAPTER SHALL ALLOW A CUSTOMER WHO IS UNDER CONTRACT, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO A MULTI-YEAR CONTRACT OR BUNDLE CONTRACT, TO BREAK SUCH CONTRACT WITHOUT PENALTY WHEN SUCH CUSTOMER IS: (A) A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, AS DEFINED IN SECTION FOUR HUNDRED FIFTY-NINE-A OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES LAW; (B) SUCH CUSTOMER REQUESTS RELEASE IN WRITING; AND (C) SUCH CUSTOMER POSSESSES ANY ORDER OF PROTECTION, OTHER THAN A TEMPORARY ORDER OF PROTECTION, THAT HAS BEEN ISSUED BY A COURT OF COMPETENT JURISDICTION. THE TELEPHONE COMPANY SHALL WAIVE THE OTHERWISE APPLICABLE CHARGES FOR BREAKING SUCH CONTRACT. SUCH WAIVER OF CHARGES SHALL BE FOR THE DURATION OF THE APPLICABLE, NON-TEMPORARY, ORDER.

S 2. Section 399-yy of the general business law, as added by chapter 202 of the laws of 2013, is amended to read as follows:

S 399-yy. Cable television company providing telephone services. 1. Every cable television company, as defined in section two hundred twelve of the public service law, that provides telephone service to customers in New York shall, at its option: a. allow a customer to use a modified or alternative name for a directory listing or b. waive the otherwise applicable charges for a non-published telephone listing, where the

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

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customer requests protection of its identity in connection with the customer's purchase of telephone service and the customer is a victim of domestic violence, as defined in section four hundred fifty-nine-a of the social services law, and for whose benefit any order of protection, other than a temporary order of protection, has been issued by a court of competent jurisdiction. This waiver of charges shall be for the duration of the applicable, non-temporary, order. Any non-published listings provided in this section shall conform to all the same requirements of other non-published listings. A customer requesting such an accommodation shall provide a copy of the order of protection to the applicable cable television company. Any customer requesting an accommodation pursuant to this section may also request and shall be provided, at no cost to the customer, a new telephone number within fifteen days from the request for such accommodation.

2. EVERY CABLE TELEVISION COMPANY, AS DEFINED IN SECTION TWO HUNDRED TWELVE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE LAW, THAT PROVIDES TELEVISION AND/OR TELEPHONE SERVICE TO CUSTOMERS IN NEW YORK SHALL ALLOW A CUSTOMER WHO IS UNDER CONTRACT, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO A MULTI-YEAR CONTRACT OR BUNDLE CONTRACT, TO BREAK SUCH CONTRACT WITHOUT PENALTY WHEN SUCH CUSTOMER IS: A. A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, AS DEFINED IN SECTION FOUR HUNDRED FIFTY-NINE-A OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES LAW; B. SUCH CUSTOMER REQUESTS RELEASE IN WRITING; AND C. SUCH CUSTOMER POSSESSES ANY ORDER OF PROTECTION, OTHER THAN A TEMPORARY ORDER OF PROTECTION, THAT HAS BEEN ISSUED BY A COURT OF COMPETENT JURISDICTION.

S 3. The general business law is amended by adding a new section 399-yyy to read as follows:

S 399-YYY. SATELLITE TELEVISION COMPANY PROVIDING TELEVISION AND/OR TELEPHONE SERVICES. 1. EVERY DIRECT BROADCAST SATELLITE SERVICE PROVIDER, AS DEFINED IN THIS SECTION, THAT PROVIDES TELEVISION AND/OR TELEPHONE SERVICES TO CUSTOMERS IN NEW YORK SHALL ALLOW A CUSTOMER WHO IS UNDER CONTRACT, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO A MULTI-YEAR CONTRACT OR BUNDLE CONTRACT, TO BREAK SUCH CONTRACT WITHOUT PENALTY WHEN SUCH CUSTOMER IS (A) A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, AS DEFINED IN SECTION FOUR HUNDRED FIFTY-NINE-A OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES LAW AND (B) SUCH CUSTOMER REQUESTS RELEASE IN WRITING AND (C) SUCH CUSTOMER POSSESSES ANY ORDER OF PROTECTION, OTHER THAN A TEMPORARY ORDER OF PROTECTION, THAT HAS BEEN ISSUED BY A COURT OF COMPETENT JURISDICTION.

2. FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION, THE FOLLOWING TERMS SHALL HAVE THE FOLLOWING MEANINGS:

(A) "DIRECT BROADCAST SATELLITE SERVICE", MEANS THE DISTRIBUTION OR BROADCASTING BY SATELLITE OF VIDEO PROGRAMMING OR SERVICES DIRECTLY TO RECEIVING EQUIPMENT LOCATED AT AN END USER SUBSCRIBER'S OR AN END USER CUSTOMER'S PREMISES, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, THE PROVISION OF PREMIUM CHANNELS, THE PROVISION OF MUSIC OR OTHER AUDIO SERVICES OR CHANNELS, AND ANY OTHER SERVICE RECEIVED IN CONNECTION WITH THE PROVISION OF DIRECT BROADCAST SATELLITE SERVICE.

(B) "DIRECT BROADCAST SATELLITE SERVICE PROVIDER", MEANS A PERSON WHO TRANSMITS, BROADCASTS OR OTHERWISE PROVIDES DIRECT BROADCAST SATELLITE SERVICE TO SUBSCRIBERS OR CUSTOMERS IN THE STATE.

S 4. This act shall take effect immediately.