

274--A

2015-2016 Regular Sessions

I N A S S E M B L Y

(PREFILED)

January 7, 2015

Introduced by M. of A. ROZIC -- read once and referred to the Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

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 domestic violence incident report, a police report, an order of protection, or a signed affidavit

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

1 Section 1. Section 91 of the public service law is amended by adding a
2 new subdivision 8 to read as follows:
3 8. EVERY TELEPHONE CORPORATION, AS DEFINED IN THIS CHAPTER, SHALL
4 ALLOW A PERSON WHO IS UNDER CONTRACT INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, A
5 MULTI-YEAR CONTRACT OR BUNDLE CONTRACT WITH SUCH TELEPHONE CORPORATION,
6 TO OPT-OUT OF SUCH CONTRACT WITHOUT CHARGE WHEN SUCH PERSON IS A VICTIM
7 OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND REQUESTS TO OPT-OUT IN WRITING. SUCH VICTIM OF
8 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHALL PROVIDE TO SUCH TELEPHONE CORPORATION ANY OF THE
9 FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS, WHICH SHALL RELATE TO SUCH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, WITH-
10 IN SIX MONTHS OF THE DOCUMENT'S ISSUANCE: (A) A VALID DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
11 INCIDENT REPORT FORM, AS SUCH TERM IS DEFINED IN SUBDIVISION FIFTEEN OF
12 SECTION EIGHT HUNDRED THIRTY-SEVEN OF THE EXECUTIVE LAW; (B) A VALID
13 POLICE REPORT; (C) A VALID ORDER OF PROTECTION; (D) A SIGNED AFFIDAVIT
14 FROM A LICENSED MEDICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDER, EMPLOYEE OF A
15 COURT ACTING WITHIN THE SCOPE OF HIS OR HER EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL WORKER, A
16 RAPE CRISIS COUNSELOR, AS DEFINED IN SECTION FORTY-FIVE HUNDRED TEN OF
17 THE CIVIL PRACTICE LAW AND RULES, OR ADVOCATE ACTING ON BEHALF OF AN
18 AGENCY THAT ASSISTS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS. A CLAIM FOR OPTING-OUT OF
19 SUCH CONTRACT WITHOUT CHARGE SHALL BE MADE IN GOOD FAITH. SUCH TELEPHONE

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

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1 CORPORATION SHALL WAIVE THE OTHERWISE APPLICABLE CHARGES FOR SUCH PERSON
2 REQUESTING TO OPT-OUT OF SUCH CONTRACT.

3 S 2. Section 399-yy of the general business law, as amended by chapter
4 202 of the laws of 2013, is amended to read as follows:

5 S 399-yy. Cable television company providing telephone services. 1.
6 Every cable television company, as defined in section two hundred twelve
7 of the public service law, that provides telephone service to customers
8 in New York shall, at its option: a. allow a customer to use a modified
9 or alternative name for a directory listing or b. waive the otherwise
10 applicable charges for a non-published telephone listing, where the
11 customer requests protection of its identity in connection with the
12 customer's purchase of telephone service and the customer is a victim of
13 domestic violence, as defined in section four hundred fifty-nine-a of
14 the social services law, and for whose benefit any order of protection,
15 other than a temporary order of protection, has been issued by a court
16 of competent jurisdiction. This waiver of charges shall be for the dura-
17 tion of the applicable, non-temporary, order. Any non-published listings
18 provided in this section shall conform to all the same requirements of
19 other non-published listings. A customer requesting such an accommo-
20 dation shall provide a copy of the order of protection to the applicable
21 cable television company. Any customer requesting an accommodation
22 pursuant to this section may also request and shall be provided, at no
23 cost to the customer, a new telephone number within fifteen days from
24 the request for such accommodation.

25 2. EVERY CABLE TELEVISION COMPANY, AS DEFINED IN SECTION TWO HUNDRED
26 TWELVE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE LAW, THAT PROVIDES TELEVISION AND/OR TELE-
27 PHONE SERVICE TO CUSTOMERS IN NEW YORK UNDER CONTRACT INCLUDING, BUT NOT
28 LIMITED TO A MULTI-YEAR CONTRACT OR BUNDLED CONTRACT WITH SUCH CABLE
29 TELEVISION COMPANY, SHALL ALLOW A PERSON TO OPT-OUT OF SUCH CONTRACT
30 WITHOUT CHARGE WHEN SUCH PERSON IS A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND
31 REQUEST TO OPT-OUT IN WRITING. SUCH VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHALL
32 PROVIDE TO SUCH CABLE TELEVISION COMPANY ANY OF THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS,
33 WHICH SHALL RELATE TO SUCH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF THE
34 DOCUMENT'S ISSUANCE: (A) A VALID DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INCIDENT REPORT FORM,
35 AS SUCH TERM IS DEFINED IN SUBDIVISION FIFTEEN OF SECTION EIGHT HUNDRED
36 THIRTY-SEVEN OF THE EXECUTIVE LAW; (B) A VALID POLICE REPORT; (C) A
37 VALID ORDER OF PROTECTION; (D) A SIGNED AFFIDAVIT FROM A LICENSED
38 MEDICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDER, EMPLOYEE OF A COURT ACTING WITH-
39 IN THE SCOPE OF HIS OR HER EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL WORKER, A RAPE CRISIS
40 COUNSELOR, AS DEFINED IN SECTION FORTY-FIVE HUNDRED TEN OF THE CIVIL
41 PRACTICE LAW AND RULES, OR ADVOCATE ACTING ON BEHALF OF AN AGENCY THAT
42 ASSISTS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS. A CLAIM FOR OPTING-OUT OF SUCH
43 CONTRACT WITHOUT CHARGE SHALL BE MADE IN GOOD FAITH. SUCH CABLE TELE-
44 VISION COMPANY SHALL WAIVE THE OTHERWISE APPLICABLE CHARGES FOR SUCH
45 PERSON REQUESTING TO OPT-OUT OF SUCH CONTRACT.

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

48 S 399-YYY. SATELLITE TELEVISION COMPANY PROVIDING TELEVISION AND/OR
49 TELEPHONE SERVICES. 1. EVERY DIRECT BROADCAST SATELLITE SERVICE PROVID-
50 ER, AS DEFINED IN THIS SECTION, THAT PROVIDES TELEVISION AND/OR TELE-
51 PHONE SERVICES TO CUSTOMERS IN NEW YORK SHALL ALLOW A PERSON WHO IS
52 UNDER CONTRACT INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO A MULTI-YEAR CONTRACT OR
53 BUNDLED CONTRACT WITH SUCH SATELLITE TELEVISION COMPANY, TO OPT-OUT OF
54 SUCH CONTRACT WITHOUT CHARGE WHEN SUCH A PERSON IS A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC
55 VIOLENCE AND REQUESTS TO OPT-OUT IN WRITING. SUCH VICTIM OF DOMESTIC
56 VIOLENCE SHALL PROVIDE TO SUCH SATELLITE TELEVISION COMPANY ANY OF THE

1 FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS, WHICH SHALL RELATE TO SUCH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, WITH-
2 IN SIX MONTHS OF THE DOCUMENT'S ISSUANCE: (A) A VALID DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
3 INCIDENT REPORT FORM, AS SUCH TERM IS DEFINED IN SUBDIVISION FIFTEEN OF
4 SECTION EIGHT HUNDRED THIRTY-SEVEN OF THE EXECUTIVE LAW; (B) A VALID
5 POLICE REPORT; (C) A VALID ORDER OF PROTECTION; (D) A SIGNED AFFIDAVIT
6 FROM A LICENSED MEDICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDER, EMPLOYEE OF A
7 COURT ACTING WITHIN THE SCOPE OF HIS OR HER EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL WORKER, A
8 RAPE CRISIS COUNSELOR, AS DEFINED IN SECTION FORTY-FIVE HUNDRED TEN OF
9 THE CIVIL PRACTICE LAW AND RULES, OR ADVOCATE ACTING ON BEHALF OF AN
10 AGENCY THAT ASSISTS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS. A CLAIM FOR OPTING-OUT OF
11 SUCH CONTRACT WITHOUT CHARGE SHALL BE MADE IN GOOD FAITH. SUCH SATEL-
12 LITE TELEVISION COMPANY SHALL WAIVE THE OTHERWISE APPLICABLE CHARGES FOR
13 SUCH PERSON REQUESTING TO OPT-OUT OF SUCH CONTRACT.

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

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

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

26 S 4. This act shall take effect immediately.