

STATE OF NEW YORK

2653

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 23, 2023

Introduced by Sen. COMRIE -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Consumer Protection

AN ACT to amend the general business law, in relation to creating the cell phone users' bill of rights

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The general business law is amended by adding a new section
2 390-e to read as follows:

3 § 390-e. Cell phone users' bill of rights. 1. Any person, firm, corpo-
4 ration, or other entity that offers cellular phones and cellular phone
5 services to the public shall provide each customer with a thirty-day
6 trial period. If a customer returns a phone or cancels service within
7 that thirty-day period, he or she shall not be subject to any termi-
8 nation fees.

9 a. When a new phone is purchased, the thirty-day period shall commence
10 when the customer physically receives the phone.

11 b. When a person applies for new service, the thirty-day period shall
12 commence when the customer's account is activated.

13 2. Whenever a person returns a phone or cancels a service within the
14 thirty-day trial period required pursuant to subdivision one of this
15 section, such person shall be responsible for the monthly access fee,
16 pro rata, and shall also be responsible for the costs of any calls made
17 by such person if they are not included within the monthly access fee.

18 3. a. Any person, firm, corporation, or other entity that provides
19 cellular phone services to a customer for a fee, such fee shall only
20 include those services authorized by the customer. No person, firm,
21 corporation, or other entity shall charge a customer for any service
22 such customer did not request or authorize.

23 b. Any person, firm, corporation, or other entity that provides cellu-
24 lar phone services to a customer for a fee shall include on its monthly
25 statement a clear and concise breakdown of all fees, costs, and taxes.

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

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1 Such breakdown shall further specify which fees, taxes, or surcharges
2 are mandated by the government, and which fees, taxes, or surcharges are
3 imposed by the company. Such monthly statement shall also include the
4 rates and terms of the customer's service agreement.

5 4. A customer shall not be liable for any charges to his or her
6 account if such charges are the result of calls or messages placed from
7 a phone other than one owned by the customer. It shall be the responsi-
8 bility of the person, firm, corporation, or other entity to ensure that
9 all services are used solely by the phone registered to the person
10 authorized under the service agreement. A customer shall not be liable
11 for any charges resulting from the theft of the customer's cellular
12 phone identification or signal.

13 5. Any person, firm, corporation, or other entity that violates the
14 provisions of this section shall pay a fine of not less than five
15 hundred dollars nor more than five thousand dollars per violation. Such
16 person, firm, corporation, or other entity shall also be liable to the
17 customer for civil damages in an amount of two hundred fifty dollars or
18 the customer's actual expenses, whichever is greater. The court shall
19 grant reasonable attorney's fees to any customer who is successful in an
20 action brought pursuant to this subdivision.

21 § 2. This act shall take effect on the one hundred twentieth day after
22 it shall have become a law.