



Communities for **Telecom Rights**

Media Advisory

January 27th, 2005

Contact: Maria Camposeco, CTR

SUSPENSION OF TELECOM BILL OF RIGHTS A BLOW TO LIMITED-ENGLISH PROFICIENT

San Francisco – The decision today by the Public Utilities Commission to stay the Telecom Bill of Rights is a blow to all consumers, specifically those who speak little English and are particularly vulnerable to fraud and misleading advertising.

Comprised of more than 40 community-based organizations across the state, Communities for Telecom Rights (CTR) works with these vulnerable consumers in their native languages to fight erroneous charges.

“We who work with low-income and limited-English proficient consumers see them get the short-end everyday,” said Henry Izumizaki, interim executive director of the California Consumer Protection Foundation, which oversees this unique network.

“Taking away this modest protection is kicking a dog when it is down.”

The CTR works daily with limited-English proficient speakers. Our members find that when these consumers question charges or challenge an unauthorized switch in services, many are treated poorly and dismissed. Rarely do they find anyone who speaks their language.

“Language and cultural norms often lead Hispanic and Asian consumers to be hesitant to challenge unfairness and fraud, making them the ideal victims,” said Juliet Stone of Asian Pacific American Legal Center in Los Angeles, a lead agency in the network.

“The fight to reinstate the Telecom Bill of Rights must continue,” said Ana Montes of Latino Issues Forum, a lead agency in San Francisco.

“We have to continue to get our voices heard and work to get this policy implemented,” said Montes. “This is not about who can afford to stay in the game – we have to stay in the game.”

Network members are trained to work with telecom consumers and together speak more than a dozen languages including Spanish, Cantonese, Laotian Tagalog and Vietnamese.

The CTR is a three-year, \$6 million project funded out of a settlement between the PUC and phone service providers for alleged marketing abuses in Web site at www.telecomrights.net.