

**DID YOU KNOW?** Corporations VOTED to adopt this. Through ALEC, global companies work as “equals” in “unison” with politicians to write laws to govern your life. Big Business has “a VOICE and a VOTE,” according to newly exposed documents. **DO YOU?**

### Statement of Principles for Slamming

Competition in the telecommunications industry allows opportunities for providers to change one or more of a customer's selected telephone service providers without the customer's knowledge, agreement or express authorization, an activity commonly known as “slamming”. Unauthorized changes in telephone service providers are deceptive practices in conducting business and an action that causes injury to customers. Unauthorized changes in telephone service providers may subject customers to excessive telephone charges, requiring time and effort by customers to reverse changes, and depriving customers of a choice of telephone providers. Accordingly, ALEC declares that it is in the public interest to prohibit any unauthorized changes in preferred providers of local telephone service and/or long-distance service to residential or business customers, to establish procedure for authorizing changes in customers' telephone service providers, and to provide meaningful and effective penalties for unauthorized changes in providers of telephone service.

In keeping with the above philosophy ALEC recommends that state consider the following principles when developing legislation:

1. Require companies to provide customers with sufficient information upon which to make informed choices among telecommunications providers.

- A clear communication of the exact service to be changed and the affirmation of the subscriber that the selection of the telecommunications provider will result in a change of providers.
- This communication should also contain the name of the selected provider, the selected provider's toll-free telephone number and the charges associated with the change.

2. Require any company to obtain consent from the subscriber before causing any product to be billed to the subscriber's telephone bill.

- The consent of the telephone service subscriber may be verified utilizing any method that is consistent with federal law or regulation, which may include written, electronic or third party verification.

3. Recognize that the best mechanism to discourage and prevent slamming is to remove the economic incentive to slam.

- Civil penalties may include fines, suspension or revocation of operating authority.
- Restitution paid to subscriber and authorized carrier
- Require the unauthorized carrier to pay for reasonable billing and collection expenses, including attorney fees, incurred by the authorized carrier.
- Require the unauthorized carrier to pay for the expenses of restoring the subscriber to his or her authorized carrier.

4. Provide language to make slamming unlawful.

- No telecommunications carrier shall execute an unauthorized conversion of a subscribers telecommunications provider to

another telecommunications provider

- Provide the appropriate enforcement agency with the authority to investigate incidents of slamming to pursue appropriate legal remedies on behalf of the state and consumers

5. Clarify the rights and remedies available to customers with regard to easily accessible means of resolving disputes over unauthorized, misleading, or fraudulent practices.

6. Provide subscribers the option of a preferred carrier freeze, which prevents a change in a subscriber's preferred carrier selection, including a reasonable procedure(s) for lifting the freeze.

7. States should write and interpret statutes and regulations in a manner consistent with the federal law and the Federal Communications commission's slamming rules and orders.

Did you know that global telecommunications company AT&T was the corporate co-chair in 2011?

*Adopted by the Telecommunications & Information Technology Task Force in 1999.*

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