



Lend Us Your Voice

TELL WASHINGTON NO TO AN UNFAIR, PHONE TAX
TOGETHER WE CAN KEEP USF FAIR FOR ALL AMERICANS!

If you have a telephone, you pay into the Universal Service Fund (USF) to ensure all Americans have access to telecommunications services.

Current Fair System: If you use more—like big businesses—you pay more. If you use less—like most consumers, small businesses—you pay less.

VS.

Proposed Flat Fee: Big businesses and consumers would pay the same fee. Your rate of tax would be the same as a big business.

If the FCC approves the flat fee plan, tens of millions of Americans will see a tax increase on their local and wireless phone bills, including prepaid.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

✓ STAY INFORMED

- Sign up for News Alerts.
- Read Latest News.
- View our New Ads.

✓ TALK TO THE MEDIA

- Contact the media about this issue.
- Write letters to the editor of your local paper.

✓ SHARE THE NEWS

- Tell friends, family and your community members about the issue.
- Share this Call to Action with 5 other people.
- Send the Keep USF Fair Coalition website link to the people in your address book.

✓ TALK TO POLICY MAKERS

- Organize a meeting with your Member of Congress at home and bring this issue to their attention.
- Call 1-888-225-5322 Ext. 0 and tell the FCC that you oppose a flat fee USF plan.
- Send a letter to your Members of Congress and the FCC via the Keep USF Fair Coalition website www.keepUSFair.org

✓ MOBILIZE YOUR COMMUNITY

- Contact us at comments@keepUSFair.org and we'll send you an ACTION KIT.

MEMBERS: Alliance for Public Technology • Alliance for Retired Americans • American Association of People with Disabilities • American Corn Growers Association
American Council of the Blind • Black Leadership Forum • Consumer Action • Deafness Research Foundation • Gray Panthers • Latino Issues Forum
League of United Latin American Citizens • National Association of the Deaf • National Grange • National Hispanic Council on Aging
National Native American Chamber of Commerce • Telecommunications Research & Action Center • World Institute on Disability • **Supporters** NAACP

The Universal Service Fund Keeps Us Connected. Let's Keep it Fair.

www.keepUSFair.org



Your Contact Guide

You can send letters to your Members of Congress and the FCC by logging on to our website www.keepUSFair.org. Use your contact guide to mail your letter and call your decision-makers for added impact.

How to Contact the FCC

VIA E-MAIL

- fccinfo@fcc.gov

VIA TELEPHONE

- 1-888-225-5322 (1-888-CALL FCC) Voice: toll-free
- 1-888-835-5322 (1-888-TELL FCC) TTY: toll-free

SENDING MAIL TO THE FCC

- Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

How To Contact Congress

VIA TELEPHONE

- US Capitol Switchboard 202-224-3121

HOW TO FIND YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

- Log on to www.congress.org and enter your zip code

SENDING MAIL TO YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

- Senator [insert name]
Washington, DC 20510
- Congressperson [insert name]
Washington, DC 20515

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Mail Your Letter to Washington Decision-Makers

Below is a sample letter you can use when writing your Members of Congress

Dear [Member of Congress],

I respectfully request that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) keep the Universal Service Fund (USF) collection system fair. I believe that the current USF is fair because it collects based on usage (minutes used of long distance). The proposed change under consideration by the FCC to a subscriber line (per user) fee will unfairly discriminate against low-volume users — including prepaid wireless users — since their USF fees would be the same as high-volume users. It is simply not fair to charge low-volume users the same amount as high-volume long distance consumers, like businesses. I urge the Commission to reject any proposal to change to a flat, connections-based system.

I will make my position known to the FCC, Members of Congress and the public, so that they may oppose these efforts to increase the costs of our vital telecommunications services.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Your city] [Your state]

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Mail Your Letter to Washington Decision-Makers

Below is a sample letter you can use when writing to the
Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

Subject: RE: Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service — Docket 96-45

Dear Chairman Martin,

I urge you to support the "Fair Share Plan" as a solution to current concerns with the Universal Service Fund (USF). The Fair Share Plan will keep the USF fair, ensuring that consumers like me do not pay the same rate into the USF as big businesses, **regardless of how little I may use long distance.**

The Keep USF Fair Coalition submitted the Fair Share Plan to the FCC on January 31, 2005. It expands who pays into the USF so that other technologies—not just phones—pay into the system. The Fair Share Plan collects the USF using a combination numbers- and revenue-based plan. This keeps the system fair, equitable and non-discriminatory.

Under the flat fee or numbers-based plan you are considering, people like me who make few long distance calls would pay the same as people or businesses that make many calls. I believe it would be **unfair to charge low-volume and residential customers the same fees as high-volume residential or business customers.**

I urge you to keep the USF fair, and adopt the Fair Share Plan. Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Your city] [Your state]

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Tips on Writing Your Letters to the Editor

E-mail us a copy of your letter to comments@keepUSFair.org

✓ State your opinion right away.

"I am writing because..."

✓ Keep it short and focused.

Many newspapers have strict length limits and edit letters for space. A concise, single-issue letter has a better chance of retaining its salient points and keeping the reader's interest.

✓ Make specific references.

While some newspapers will print general commentary letters, most prefer letters that respond to a specific article.

"I am writing in response to the article on prepaid..."

✓ Be factual and highlight aspects of the issue that haven't been previously addressed.

✓ Include your contact information.

Many newspapers will only publish a letter to the editor after verifying the author's contact information. When printed, the letter will usually only include your name and city.

✓ Type your letter and sign it.

✓ Send letters to smaller newspapers.

Small newspapers are more likely to print your letter and the letter can then spark local community action.

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WHAT SENIOR, CONSUMER, EDUCATION, DISABILITY, RURAL & MINORITY GROUPS ARE SAYING ABOUT The Universal Service Fund & The Collection Methodology

“Universal service cannot harm those citizens it was created to assist. Shifting the cost burden to these consumers would violate the spirit of universal service.”

—Alliance for Public Technology

“...a connection-based universal service fee would unfairly burden low-income and low-volume customers — those intended to benefit from the universal service goals.”

—American Council of the Blind

“Electronic communications and the internet is becoming imperative to the economic life and civic activity for the disability community. We urge you to oppose efforts to weaken universal service funding by switching to a connections based model and to support efforts to strengthen our nation's commitment to universal service.”

—Deafness Research Foundation and
The World Council on Hearing

“Telecommunications provide crucial social links for generations. This proposed change could cut those links by severing the lifelines of seniors who are disproportionately low- and fixed-income people.”

—Gray Panthers

“We view these (connection-based) proposals regressive in nature... that fail to meet the FCC's additional criteria of the public interest.”

—League of United Latin American Citizens

“This drastic shift in USF funding support would hardest hit low-income, residential and low-volume long distance users, a disproportionate number of whom are minorities represented by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People”

—NAACP resolution

“It would be unfair and inequitable to low-volume telephone users to pay the same fee as high-volume users. ... The FCC must be careful not to take any action that would dis-advantage certain classes of consumers or service providers. The present system based on percentage of long-distance revenue, while not perfect, seems to be the most equitable manner of assessing USF contributions.”

—National Consumers League

“[T]he current revenue-based funding methodology provides a very equitable, nondiscriminatory, and competitively neutral approach to funding the USF fund and the proposed alternative connection based methodology does not.”

—National Black Caucus of State Legislators Resolution

“The connection-based methodology proposal being reviewed at the Commission will pose a disproportionate financial burden on low-income and low-volume consumers.”

—Rainbow/PUSH

“The current revenue-based methodology deserves to be recognized as the most equitable, least discriminatory, and least market intrusive manner in which funds can be collected.”

—National Grange

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CONSUMERS SUPPORT THE FAIR SHARE PLAN AND SPEAK OUT AGAINST A CONNECTIONS BASED USF COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

What they are saying:

"Cell phones need to be kept affordable for those who only want them for emergencies and even occasional convenience."

Lisa

"I may only use 10 minutes in a month. Why should I pay the same as someone who uses hundreds? This is so unfair..."

Rosemary

"I am a single parent and can't even really afford a cell phone. Most people that buy prepaid cell phones cannot afford much and that's why they have them in the first place!"

Amie

"I purchased my [phone] only for emergencies. I cannot afford to pay regular cellular fees ...This will take emergency phone services away from many people who only use it for emergencies and safety."

Flora

Hear their Voices — and add Yours

Don't let the FCC make a change that is UNFAIR to those who can least afford it! Log on to www.keepUSFFair.org and take action today to support a fair, equitable USF.

If the FCC approves the radical "connection-based" method for USF funding, tens of millions of Americans will be forced to pay yet another tax increase on their local phone and cellular bills. The FCC tax hike targets those least able to afford it—the elderly, students, minorities, farmers, small business owners and other low-volume telephone users.

PROBLEM: A Flat Fee Proposal

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) wants to shift the burden of the Universal Service Fund (USF) collection method from large corporate long distance users to consumers like YOU.

Through the adoption of a flat monthly connection charge, residential customers would pay the same as business customers and low volume callers would pay the same as high volume callers.

SOLUTION: The Fair Share Plan

THE FAIR SHARE PLAN protects all consumers by proposing to:

- Expand USF contribution base to include all revenues derived from telecommunications, including services using Voice over the Internet Protocol (VoIP) technology.
- Establish a contribution factor cap to be applied to the revenue-based approach.
- Establish a numbers based recovery system to obtain balance of the funds needed to support USF.

Support the Fair Share Plan!

It ensures that the funding burden is not placed on those least able to contribute at higher levels.

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WANTED



USF FLAT-FEE PROPOSAL

Be on the Lookout:

"I am surprised at the people that do not know that most of their phone bill is made up of taxes and 'charges' and 'fees'. My basic phone bill is \$22.85, which INCLUDES caller ID, call waiting and call forwarding. The taxes, charges and fees total \$18.45. That is almost the same as my basic bill and I think **this is robbery without a gun...** If there is anything I can do to help stop this unfair practice, I will certainly attempt to do it."

— Betty McKay, TX

JOIN BETTY AND HELP STOP THIS UNFAIR PHONE FEE IN ITS TRACKS!
TELL THE FCC AND CONGRESS TO KEEP USF FAIR FOR ALL AMERICANS!

The flat fee proposal is looking to shift the burden of the Universal Service Fund (USF) from large corporate long distance users to average American consumers like you. Instead of the current fair system, the fee may change to a flat monthly connection charge. This would mean residential customers like you would pay the same as business customers and low volume callers would pay the same as high volume callers.

For more information and to take action please visit

www.keepUSFair.org

Paid for by TRACFONE Wireless, Inc.


KEEP USF FAIR
Universal Service Fund