

JOINT COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION POLICY

COMMITTEE ROLL

Date: 3/22/2000

SB-91

	Pres.	Abs.	Exc.
Senator Jauch	✓	—	—
Senator Erpenbach	✓	—	—
Senator Shibilski	✓	—	—
Senator Rosenzweig	✓	—	—
Senator Darling	✓	—	—
Representative Hutchison	✓	—	—
Representative Kaufert Montgomery	✓	—	—
Representative Spillner	✓	—	—
Representative Schneider	✓	—	—
Representative Kreuser	✓	—	—

SENATE HEARING SLIP

(Please Print Plainly)

DATE: 3/22
BILL NO. SB91/AB879
OF 911
SUBJECT _____

JOE GRECO
(NAME)
N74 WISGAY ROAD
(Street Address or Route Number)
MENOMONIE FALLS, WIS
(City and Zip Code)
VILLAGE PRES - MENOMONIE FALLS
(Representing)

Speaking in Favor:

Speaking Against:

Registering in Favor:
but not speaking:

Registering Against:
but not speaking:

Speaking for information
only; Neither for nor against:

Please return this slip to a messenger **PROMPTLY**.

Senate Sergeant-At-Arms
State Capitol - B35 South
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

'Most voters say they consider George W. Bush "somewhat conservative," which is how most of them categorize themselves.'

David S. Broder

Wednesday, March 22, 2000

OPINION

WISCONSIN STATE JOURNAL

OUR OPINION

Phone fees bill deserves chance

Sooner than later, Wisconsin's emergency 911 telephone system must be updated to ensure public safety. But who will pay for the \$60 million in improvements that must be made over the next five years?

As it stands, local property taxpayers would pay for that upgrade. That's why local officials, sheriffs, fire chiefs and other public safety administrators have joined with the Citizens' Utility Board and four long-distance telephone companies in supporting a different approach. They are urging the Legislature to pass a bill that would pay for the inevitable 911 upgrades through cuts in existing phone charges that all consumers pay.

It's a plan that lawmakers should give serious consideration.

The unusual alliance that makes up the Campaign for Fair Phone Charges wants to lower long-distance access fees paid to Ameritech, GTE and Century Telephone and reserve the savings for 911 improvements.

These access fees are charged by local telephone exchange companies to long-distance carriers for completing a call, and the fees range from 2 cents to 10 cents per minute. The bill would limit access fees to amounts that the local carriers customarily charge each other for completing calls.

The long-distance carriers have been howling about access fees for years, mainly because they see it as free money for the local companies and a way to box them out of the local telephone business. The local companies have, quite naturally, resisted lowering those fees and have always questioned the public purpose for doing so. Why should Ameritech get less money just so AT&T can get more, they ask?

That question has been answered with the proposal to earmark all of the initial savings from lower access fees to making improvements in the

Hearing set for today

The Legislature's Joint Committee on Information Technology will hold a hearing on Senate Bill 91 and its twin, Assembly Bill 879, at 8:30 a.m. today in Room 300 SE of the Capitol.

911 system. It's not AT&T or U.S. Cellular that will benefit, but local taxpayers who won't be forced to absorb the costs of 911 improvements.

Two parts of the bill deserve closer examination.

First, it applies only to the biggest telephone companies and not the smaller companies also make up the Wisconsin State Telecommunications Association. If it's good policy for the Big Three, why not for the Small 80? Answer: Politics. Supporters of the bill recognize that rural legislators in both political parties will be reluctant to take away a source of income for their local phone companies. What makes for good politics does not always make for good policy, however.

Second, there is no reason to force a \$40 million reduction in access fees overnight. The \$60 million in 911 improvements must be spaced over five years or more, so it's only fair to give the local phone companies time to adjust. Access fees have been reduced since 1994 — just not by enough to please the long-distance carriers and CUB.

Telephone access fees are a holdover from an era when the telecommunications industry was regulated and the business was shielded from competition. Removing those fees over time would be a step toward more competition and greater choice for consumers. If the initial savings can be used to make sure 911 works when we need it, all of Wisconsin will be better served.

Sheridan Triangle Neighborhood Association

Ted Voth, Jr.
President
1402 Hooker Avenue
Madison 53704
242-9603

To: Joint Committee on Information Policy
From: Margaret McEntire
Date: March 22, 2000
Re: Assembly companion to Senate Bill 91

Kay Cowing
Vice President
1517 Porter Avenue
Madison 53704
241-0919

Marian Celesnik
Treasurer
1734 Sheridan Drive
Madison 53704
241-3742

Margaret McEntire
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1721 Porter Avenue
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I write on behalf of my neighborhood association to urge Committee Members to oppose the Assembly's substitute amendment to Senate Bill 91.

Using the Internet has been a great boon to our neighborhood association. Our board members, including me, are busy on any number of fronts on any given day. Being able to supplement our monthly board meetings by conducting "online" meetings via email, keeping abreast of city government by regularly checking Madison's website, and quickly exchanging information *as a group* with our Alderwoman, have all been invaluable in helping us carry forward our neighborhood association's business. All four of us on our Board of Directors are very aware of the numbers of times we connect to the Internet: it shows up as another call on our phone bills, but it is worth it!

Long distance telephone companies are trying to make a deal with the Legislature, asking to allow access charges to be used to pay for operating expenses for the 911 system. This is not right; access charges paid by long distance telephone companies to local phone companies for the use of their lines helps to contain our local phone bills, while the 911 system, which is a critical part of our phone service, is a separate matter entirely. Long distance companies cite the promise of passing savings on to their customers, who presumably would then not have to pay to upgrade the 911 service, through taxes or other means.

My first "real" job as an adult was as an intern for the Legal Affairs Desk of Consumers Union in Mt. Vernon, N.Y. Since then I have keenly followed Consumers Union's opinions on various public policy issues and proposed legislation, particularly the tangled thicket of telecommunications legislation and regulations. In 1998, Gene Kimmelman, Co-Director of the Washington, D.C. office of Consumers Union, said that "Federal regulators gave long distance companies a great price break in charges they pay to use local phone equipment, but we can't find any evidence that those savings are being passed on in an even handed way to all residential customers...Carrier line charges and universal service charges now showing up on the bottom of phone bills need to be stamped out. To offset current overcharges, payments already made should be returned to consumers' pockets."

Long distance companies failed in 1998 and 1999 to absorb the cost of carrier line charges and universal service charges, instead continuing the practice of passing them on to their customers. What makes you think that long distance companies will now pass along any savings to their customers?

My observation -- and Mr. Kimmelman's experience seems to bear it out -- is that it won't happen this time, either. Please vote no to this substitute amendment.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS

Brown County



307 SOUTH ADAMS STREET
ROOM 225
GREEN BAY, WISCONSIN 54301-4582

Emergency Communication Services
9-1-1 Center Operations
Emergency Management

PHONE (920) 448-7611
FAX (920) 448-7614

Brendan W. Bruss
Director

22 March, 2000

Statement before the Joint Committee on Information Policy re: SB91, SSA1 / AB879

My name is Brendan Bruss, Director of Public Safety Communications for Brown County. I am in the position of creating and implementing a countywide 9-1-1 center for Brown County that will combine the current 9-1-1 answering points and dispatch activities for the City of Green Bay, De Pere and Brown County. Prior to this past year, I was the Administrative Manager for the City of Chicago's 9-1-1 Center, an organization that fields 4 million 9-1-1 calls per year and is comprised of over 900 personnel with an annual operating budget of \$60 million. I tell you this because it is the leading communications center in the country where the citizens of Chicago enjoy a system that answers 98% of all 9-1-1 calls in less than 2 seconds. The latest software and equipment to locate callers and dispatch emergency police/fire/ems services is provided in that center. Based on my experience in this state it is clear that we are not adequately prepared to deliver the same quality of 9-1-1 services. And I know that we can not say to the citizens of Wisconsin that they deserve any less than the citizens of Chicago when it comes to the most basic and critical of all public services, 9-1-1.

Especially true in Brown County as of late, the desire to protect the taxpayer and provide essential government services is often impacted by many external pressures. But, we have an opportunity in front of us to improve the delivery of a service that protects lives and property while reducing some of that burden from the property tax. Understand that we have personnel who stand ready 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to take emergency calls for service in the most critical of all situations. When you or someone you know has to place that call, we take action. We know our job and do our job, or the safety of citizens and the dedicated field personnel that respond to emergency situations is sacrificed.

In Brown County and in most of the 9-1-1 centers across this state, we are faced with many upgrade requirements to meet the current and future needs of 9-1-1 call taking and dispatching emergency service providers. In Brown County, we are not able to have a countywide dispatch center without upgrading our telephone, radio, and data equipment. Many of the emergency communications systems were implemented in the 1980's and statewide investment for 9-1-1 centers is in the range of \$60 million in order to provide our dispatch centers with current technology. In approximately 8 of the 10 largest PSAPs in the state, the equipment in the communications center is not capable of handling the future requirements of processing a cellular (wireless) 9-1-1 call for service.

There are two ways to deliver 9-1-1 services to dispatch centers. The first, is with a "Basic 9-1-1" system where a citizen dials 9-1-1 and the call goes to the proper center, but the dispatcher does not receive any information on the caller. The second, is with an "Enhanced 9-1-1" system where

the dispatcher will receive a display of the callers name and location. The delivery of the phone lines and the database information to the 9-1-1 Center is funded through the current surcharge on the phone bill for citizens with an Enhanced 9-1-1 service. This money is paid directly to the local phone carrier by the citizen and not to local government for any costs associated with operating a 9-1-1 center. We currently are in the position of funding all of our equipment and operational requirements off of the property tax levy. Now, if one has ever risen to the "defense of the taxpayer" and taken a "strong stance" on public safety issues, it would be difficult to justify not supporting what is in front of you today.

It is extremely important to understand that a 9-1-1 center integrates many systems with the telecommunications network into the emergency dispatching process. We operate Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) software to manage multiple incidents, receive hazardous information alerts and to send the appropriate public safety responders to the calls. We have critical radio communications systems and consoles in order to communicate to the field personnel. We integrate mobile computer systems into our dispatch centers in order for police, fire and ems personnel to receive dispatch information and data over a wireless data network. These are not nice to have tools, they are our necessary tools to do the job of saving lives and protecting officer safety. In our business we could have the ability to automatically map the location of a caller and the location of the nearest police, fire or rescue vehicle; we could have sophisticated telephone consoles to provide medical alerts, prior call history, and call answering statistics; we could be in the position of locating a wireless caller by plotting the signal from a wireless telephone. We couldbut we don't.

Our most critical challenge in the future is having the necessary equipment in our centers to effectively process a wireless 9-1-1 call for service. On a phone that is "connected to a wall" or a landline phone, we receive the name and location of that phone. On a wireless phone, we do not receive any information. In a day and age where people purchase cellular telephones for safety purposes, we can not provide the same level of service to those callers. In a near future where someone's wireless phone will also be their permanent phone, we will not know where that person is or what their number is to call back. In almost every center in this state, we need to get telephone and CAD software that can take an XY coordinate and plot it onto a map in order to achieve this service. Most all of us do not even have an automated map. Most of us do not have the necessary telephone equipment to display a ten-digit phone number, which is essential.

We are in the process of coordinating a regional sharing of public safety data between four counties in the Fox Valley region through a concept called FoxComm. We are pursuing common CAD software that will eventually allow our dispatch personnel and public safety field officers to access critical data associated with incidents, names or addresses. This effort is underway, but can not be accomplished across the counties of Brown, Calumet, Outagamie and Winnebago without upfront capital funding. This project is extremely beneficial to our 9-1-1 centers and public safety officers across our region. But, our citizens and officers will not reap this safety benefit without the investment in this network.

Our citizens of this state must be given the most effective emergency response system available. All citizens desire reducing some of that burden from the property tax. The Bill will help us to achieve both of these results. This Bill will produce positive results for citizens and officers in life and death situations. Thank you.



Brendan W. Bruss
Director



KATHLEEN M. FALK
County Executive

COUNTY OF DANE Public Safety Communications

210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, Room 109
Madison, Wisconsin 53709
PH: 608/267-3911 • FAX: 608/266-9861

JIMMY D. PATTY
Director
608/267-1911

RICHARD "DUKE" ELLINGSON
Operations Manager
608/267-3912

To: Members of the Joint Committee on Information Policy
Representative Hutchison and Senator Jauch, Chairs

From: ^{DE} Duke Ellingson, Operations Manager
Dane County 911

Re: AB879/SB91

Date: March 22, 2000

Thank you members of the committee for the opportunity to testify on AB879 and SB91 today. I am here today on behalf of Dane County Executive Kathleen Falk and Dane County Board Chair Kevin Kesterson to express their support for the provisions contained in the bills and to respectfully ask for your support for these bills.

The legislation will provide the much-needed support to Dane County to upgrade its 911 system. It does so by reducing access charges the state's three largest local telephone companies can charge to long-distance carriers and passing along those savings in the first year to local 911 systems and, after that, to long-distance consumers like you and me.

If passed, the change would provide an estimated \$3.9 million for Dane County to use to defray the cost of essential upgrades to our 911 system over the next four years. Without this additional assistance, Dane County will be forced to bill the property taxpayers in the county to pay for upgrades that we estimate will cost \$6.9 million between this year and 2004.

These are not optional upgrades. Changes in federal regulatory requirements, the age of some of our systems and the continuing growth of 911 calls are all factors dictating the need to upgrade 911 systems in the state. These changes include upgrading critical 911 telephone equipment, radio and microwave systems and computer aided dispatch equipment.

The Dane County system processed nearly 175,000 911 calls in 1999, an increase of 25,000 calls in just the past three years. These technology upgrades will allow us to more quickly and efficiently respond to the emergency needs of our citizens and to maintain the highest level of safety for the responding emergency personnel.

As the critical first point of contact in any public safety system, the quality and dependability of 911 systems in Wisconsin needs to be a high priority. That's why this bill makes good sense, both from a taxpayer's and consumer's point of view. That is why our County Executive and County Board Chair are supporting it and ask you to vote for its passage.

Thank you.

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