**Letter to the editor to major daily newspapers in support of the local telephone wholesale system (UNE-P)**

February 13, 2003

To the editor:

Consumers deserve the ability to choose who provides their local telephone service, but a proposal the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will consider on February 20 would stop competition dead in its tracks. While the decision will be made in Washington, DC, it will impact everyone around the country who pays a monthly phone bill.

If approved, the proposal would deny competitors the ability to lease vital parts of the network, called the Unbundled Network Element Platform (UNE-P), from the "Baby Bells" at reasonable rates. What would this mean for consumers? Those who have been able to participate in the competitive market would be left with fewer choices and higher local phone bills. Millions more consumers would never get the chance to enjoy the benefits of telephone choice.

Growth and competition must be allowed to continue. We cannot afford to take a giant step backward and ignore the interests of those who deserve and demand the benefits of choice - our nation's consumers.

Sincerely,

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