

Two points from someone who has a lot of experience with both problems:

- 1) Currently the phone companies love to sign you up at "great low rates" and then, mysteriously, one day you realize that you are being billed different rates than you signed up for an
- 2) When you call to get the problem resolved the person who you talk to is unable to issue an appropriate credit and when you ask for a supervisor you are told that one will call you back in 1-4 days. A supervisor does not call you back.

I believe both of these practices are intentional and designed to make the consumer so frustrated that s/he just gives up on trying to get their situation resolve. I believe that there are some solutions:

- 1) Require phone companies to clearly post your rates on the heading of your bill in no less than 14 point print. Have mandatory compensation for consumers who have their rates changed without notification, or for those who are not charged the rates they are supposed to be getting.
- 2) Impose a penalty to phone companies who do not respond to consumer complaints in a timely manner. Example, have a filing system where a consumer can file a complaint and if the phone company does not respond in say, 20 days, then the company defaults and the consumers request is granted.
- 3) Require phone companies to notify their customers when they are offering lower rates. Consumers are at a severe disadvantage with a utility like the phone because there is no real "marketplace" where they can price compare. Phone companies are certainly aware of this and do their best to obscure their rates except when they are advertising their low "sign-on" type plans. Once you sign up they have lots of ways to sting you. A consumer should not be expected to constantly call to check rates, there is something unethical in that type of argument since you usually are required to hold forever when contacting these companies for services like changing your rates.