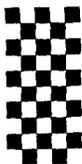


4/05/02 12:51 FAX

**U.S. SENATOR ARLEN SPECTER****711 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3802, (202) 224 -4254***CSB  
rattis*

**TO: Diane Atkinson  
Federal Communications Commission**

**FAX: (202) 418-2806**

**FROM: Jennifer Castagna**

**DATE: 4/5/02**

**PAGES (including cover): 25**

**RE: Letter on Behalf of Ms. Judith Miller**

Please see the attached letter which our office forwarded to the Federal Communications Commission on March 11, 2002. Please call me at (202) 224-3665 to apprise me of the progress on this issue. Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Jennifer Castagna  
Office of Senator Arlen Specter

RECEIVED TIME APR. 5. 12:52PM

PRINT TIME APR. 5. 12:55PM

ARLEN SPECTER  
PENNSYLVANIA

COMMITTEES:  
JUDICIARY  
APPROPRIATIONS  
VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

**United States Senate**

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3802

March 11, 2002

Diane Atkinson  
Congressional Liaison Specialist  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W., Room 8-C453  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Ms. Atkinson:

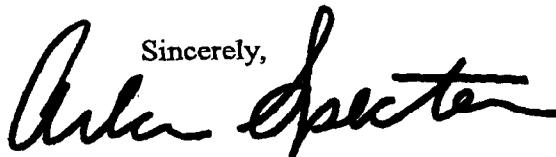
I am writing to you on behalf of one of my constituent, Ms. Judith Miller of Southampton, Pennsylvania. Ms. Miller has contacted my office regarding concerns with the level of service provided by Comcast Cable. This matter is timely in light of the possible merger recently announced by Comcast with AT&T to acquire the company's cable assets.

Please accord Ms. Miller's inquiry due consideration. Enclosed is the correspondence provided to me by Ms. Miller.

I request that you direct all correspondence regarding this issue to Ms. Judith Miller, with a copy to my Legislative Correspondent, Jennifer Castagna, at 711 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510, (202) 224-3665.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,



Arlen Specter

AS/jc

**URGENT**  
**13 pages total**



February 15, 2002

**TO:** Ms. Jennifer Castagna for  
**Senator Arlen Specter**  
**Fax: 202-228-3675**

**FROM:** Judith Miller CMP  
**Fax: 215-357-6436**

Dear Jennifer,

This will confirm our conversation the other evening with specific reference to issues regarding Comcast, as well as other concerns not responded to by your office including AT&T and security issues re the FAA. The AT&T issues go back to 1998 and 2001. In the past, these -- as well as the FAA letter -- have been directed to Mark Carmel at his instruction. Unfortunately, as I've discussed with Allegra Hasan in your office, I've never received responses from your office. I hope now that we've made contact, this impression will change for the better.

As I address my concerns regarding Comcast, it should not be lost that they are endeavoring to forge an alliance with AT&T - another step to expanding a monopoly. Let me be more specific regarding Comcast. I moved to Bucks County 7 years ago and was thrilled to be rid of Comcast in Philadelphia. I then joined the monopoly of Suburban Cable in Southampton, PA. It was no better [please see my letter to the president of Suburban Cable dated August, 1999 - almost exactly when Comcast made their move on Suburban]. The people who supported deregulation of the cable industry were duped by the monopolies like Suburban and Comcast. All the promises of increased competition which would lead to lower rates and better programming is one of the biggest scams ever perpetrated on consumers. Since I've moved to Bucks County, basic cable rates have almost doubled with no end in sight. I have been in contact with Comcast verbally for the last 18 months in particular trying to get them to understand a simple principle -- that no business has the right to continually raise rates for ever diminishing services. Free trade and competition have effectively been eliminated in Pennsylvania in the cable industry [i.e. our discussion regarding RCN].

Specifics regarding my complaints re Comcast follow:

**1816 Sinkler Circle, Southampton, PA 18966 Phone 215-357-5379 Fax 215-357-6436**

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1. **Customer Service:** The published 1800Comcast number which is supposed to function 24/7 *is rarely, if ever, answered by a live person.* A recording tells you they're too busy, leave a number and someone will get back to you. *No one ever calls back.* I've tried this dozens upon dozens of times. On the very rare occasion that someone answered, I was told I had been routed to Plymouth Meeting in error and they would connect me to Bensalem - to the never answered recording. I have spoken with the Vice President of Customer Service Office in Oaks, PA dozens of times. They referred me to a regional service manager dozens of times. They all apologize and freely acknowledge their shortcomings saying they are all aware of the complaints and hopefully they'll be addressed one day. My response to this attitude is to reduce all consumer rates until they're capable of providing the complete services consumers are being charged for. My Comcast account is to be credited with 6 months of free service due to all of the problems Comcast has challenged me with as a consumer. This has not occurred as yet.
2. **Old, recycled equipment:** Within the space of one week in December, I had 3 service personnel and 1 supervisor replace 4 analog converter boxes that did not work. When I asked how 4 new boxes could not work, I was advised the boxes are at least 10 years old [if not older], which they attempt to repair and recycle. Of course, you are billed for this old, recycled equipment. Discreetly, they told me Comcast would really rather have everyone go "digital". Sure they would - it's double the cost of analog basic service! What a racket.
3. **Continual loss of service.** I'd really appreciate receiving my basic cable without continual lapses in service and interruptions. The various excuses range anywhere from 'you have to experience the interruptions since we're upgrading your equipment'; 'we have a short in the master board'; 'we have no idea why the Emergency Broadcast System is on all the time on a green screen - must a short in the rack' [this has been happening for the last month]. On a rotating, regular basis I lose my cable service completely. It can last from 1 hour to 36 hours and since you cannot get through on their 800 number, there is rarely an explanation. My account has been periodically credited for \$1.20 or \$2.20 or thereabouts which is silly. Sometimes, just the 40, 50 and 60 channels go out. No one at Comcast knows why this happens. It's a puzzlement!

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4. **Programming.** It is obvious to me that Comcast has decided to provide the cheapest programming possible. They indiscriminantly drop channels [which I prefer], reshuffle them and then force feed them to the consumer - with no regard or market research from the consumer themselves. For example, I'd prefer the Travel Channel and Oxygen and Plex to the old, silly gameshows from 1970, Telemundo and the Cartoon channel. As I have no children in the house and do not speak Spanish I hope you understand the spirit in which this is used as an example. After all, I am paying for this service and should be able to get what I pay for. And, if you've ever had the great misfortune to suffer insomnia in the wee morning hours - 70% of Comcast programming is now sold to infomercial programs - there is not one movie to be found at 2:00 AM. It must pay Comcast very well; who cares about the consumer? In summary, Comcast's programming benefits Comcast not the consumer.

And, for all of the above, they have the unmitigated gaul to raise their rates in March for basic cable services? No hearings. No one to make them justify it or hold them accountable. The news reported the increases were due to the fact they are \$300M in the hole. Deregulation is good for one segment of the population only - those that take advantage of deregulation at the consumers' expense. Almost \$50 a month for basic cable is an absurdity.

Jennifer, up to this point, all the above - although important to me - might be viewed as frivolous. However, as we discussed, in view of the new allegations about Comcast 'spying' on their internet customers and illegally accumulating information gathered from their customers, and now under the scrutiny of the telecommunications committees of the House and Senate, perhaps this is the time to delve a bit deeper into all of Comcast's collective operations to determine why they are permitted to rape the public financially at will. If an investigation is not launched on several levels, it won't be long before we're coerced into paying \$100.00 a month for basic cable and \$200 a month for premium digital to a monopoly running amuck and grossly mismanaged. How many poor or middle class families will be able to afford that scenario?

To summarize the attachments: Please note the letter to Mr. Cece of Suburban Cable was dated August 17, 1999 and copied to the FCC in Southampton Township. The letter was never acknowledged by either Mr. Cece or the FCC. The letter dated March 20, 2001 to Mr. Armstrong of AT&T was never acknowledged by either AT&T or Senator Specter's office to which it was copied. The letter to AT&T dated September 15, 2001 is just further background. Again, never responded to.

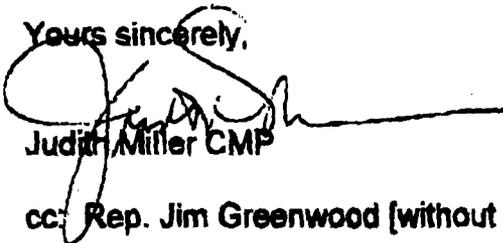
-4-

The letter dated September 24, 2001 concerns me with regard to airport security. This was addressed to Senator Specter and sent via fax 3 times to Mark Carmel, since he kept saying he didn't know what happened to it. When I tried to explain this to Allegra, she kept insisting it must have been sent on or after October 16 - it was not. I never received a response from Senator Specter or from anyone on his staff. Two weeks ago I received a form letter from the FAA that said nothing. May I bring to your attention that during this trying timeframe, I did receive a detailed response from Jim Greenwood's office and also received an acknowledgment from Tom Ridge's new office. A response from my Senator would have been greatly appreciated. As it turns out, some of my suggestions have been implemented without my input - maybe I should be working as a consumer advocate, ?? Guess my input is on the right track.

One remaining concern associated with the letter forwarded to the FAA -- with the federalization of security screeners going into effect Monday, is the decision by the FAA and DOT to permit people without high school diplomas to be placed as federal employees into these sensitive jobs allowed to stand. This, in light of President Bush's endorsement of high education values does not jive. I wonder if you know the current status of this as it emanated from the FAA and DOT. The last thing we need at those critical checkpoints are people who cannot read, count, reason or write.

Jennifer, thank you for listening. I do not wish to be accorded the dubious status of 'whistleblower' as you indicated and do not feel comfortable at this point in time allowing this letter to go past your office until we see what the Senate and Congress are considering. As this is our first introduction, I'm afraid this is a bit lengthy but we had a lot of old ground to cover. From this point forward, things can be much more pithy. When you've had time to digest all of this, I'll look forward to your thoughts and your advice as to a follow-up course of action. I'm also taking the liberty of copying Jim Greenwood on this letter with respect to the Comcast issue.

Yours sincerely,



Judith Miller CMP

cc: Rep. Jim Greenwood [without attachments]