

News Release.

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Information Page and FAQ About the case and HOTLINE.

<http://www.teletruth.org/missingcircuits.htm>

Verizon New Jersey Settles Class Action Alleging Overbilling for Special Circuits.

Teletruth Sets up Customer Hotline --- Are You Owed Money From Verizon, NJ?

New Brunswick, NJ – In July the Superior Court of NJ, Middlesex County approved a groundbreaking statewide settlement in a class action lawsuit against Verizon New Jersey, Inc. The lawsuit alleged that Verizon continued to bill customers for circuits that no longer existed. The settlement agreement provides significant benefits to Verizon customers throughout New Jersey.

Over the last five years, Teletruth's phone bill audits and surveys have found that many customers are paying for services that are non-existent or are being billed at improper rates. Non-existent services may include non-switched analog circuits that have been removed, destroyed, or used for other purposes. These can include burglar alarm circuits, telemetry circuits that are used for remote meter reading or control signals, private lines that are used as an automatic ringdown circuit, like a hotline, radio tie lines, off-premise extensions that connect to an answering service and data circuits.

FAQ --- What is a special access circuit and does your company have one?

<http://www.teletruth.org/MissingCircuitFAQ.htm>

Teletruth worked with the Washington DC law firm of Mehri & Skalet, PLLC and other law firms that were appointed by the Court to serve as class counsel to represent all Verizon NJ customers affected by this litigation. Teletruth was instrumental in identifying the "circuits" problem and supplying telecom expertise to the plaintiffs' counsel team.

Under the terms of the settlement, all New Jersey customers billed for non-switched analog circuits will be notified by Verizon. Customers can request that their circuits be disconnected and, if they believe that Verizon took the circuit out of service, have the right to request that Verizon technicians conduct an on-site inspection of the wiring. Following this inspection, if it is determined that the circuit is unusable due to Verizon's actions, the customer will receive a refund of two years worth of charges. Customers whose circuits are usable or that were destroyed, but not by Verizon, may request that charges cease immediately.

Teletruth Hotline and Free Auditing Service formed for New Jersey businesses. In order to receive the benefits of the settlement, customers must take action on or before the date printed in the settlement notice. Customers with these circuits should be receiving a notice of settlement. If you did not receive a notice and you think that you are being billed for special circuits that are not in use, you can contact Teletruth immediately.

This is the second case against Verizon New Jersey in which Teletruth has assisted plaintiffs' counsel in obtaining relief for New Jersey customers. In 2004, Teletruth worked with Mehri & Skalet in a class action suit to protect the rights of small businesses that were overcharged for business lines.

“Telephone bills have become so complex that many customers are unable to determine what they are being charged for and why,” said Steven Skalet of Mehri & Skalet, PLLC, lead counsel for the plaintiffs. “This settlement provides customers with the information they need to make informed service choices and puts money back in the pockets of customers who were charged for circuits that did not actually exist.”

“We’re pleased with the results of this case, but this is only the tip of the iceberg,” states Tom Allibone, Director of Auditing for Teletruth. “Phone bills are still riddled with problems and this settlement only covers a small portion of the potential.”

Having received final approval by Judge Alexander P. Waugh, Jr., the settlement will be implemented and customers will receive benefits. Verizon New Jersey denies all allegations of wrongdoing.

Counsel for the plaintiffs include Mehri & Skalet, PLLC, Sheller, Ludwig & Badey, PC, Seeger Weiss LLP, and Lee & Associates. The case is *Junto v. Verizon New Jersey, Inc.*, Superior Court of New Jersey, Law Division, Middlesex County, Docket No. MID-L-000297-03.

To see a Notice of Settlement, a copy of a phone bill, and for more information about the court cases, Teletruth, and the problems with phone bills, see:

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