

August 3, 2010

Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St. SW
Washington, DC 20554

RE:

WT Docket No. 08-7

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

Each of our organizations uses text messages as part of innovative programs to serve our communities and advance our missions. Recently, news of carriers disconnecting nonprofit organizations has reduced our confidence in relying on text messages for our work. Furthermore, systemic deficiencies within the current text message system makes using text messages harder, more expensive, and more time consuming than necessary. These problems also stifle investment in innovative uses of text messaging. We call on the Commission to act quickly to clarify protections for users of text messaging.

We use text messages because they are a universally compatible, low cost, and effective way to reach our target communities. While rich applications on high-end smart phones can be useful tools, no app store has the ubiquitous reach of text messaging. Even the most basic mobile phone can send and receive text messages. As mobile phones become ubiquitous, text messages become an increasingly vital platform for communications with all members of society.

We were shocked to learn that the Federal Communications Commission has thus far declined to protect users of text messages from unreasonable interference. Without government oversight, we remain at the mercy of unaccountable carriers and middlemen. Today, they alone hold the power to connect and disconnect text messages as they see fit.

Unless the Commission acts quickly, text messaging will not fulfill its potential as a dynamic communications platform. This universally accessible means of communication cannot continue to be subject to the arbitrary whims of the private sector. Please make it clear that we can use text messages to reach our communities without fear of arbitrary disconnection by resolving the pending petition in this docket and providing users of text messaging the same protections as users of other mobile phone services.

Sincerely,

American Public Media

The Humane Society of the United
States

Catholic Relief Services

National Catholic Educational
Association

Center for Community Change

National Safe Place

Defenders of Wildlife

Reform Immigration for America

DoSomething.org

United States Conference of Catholic
Bishops

cc: Ruth Milkman
Jim Schlichting