

votes. Had I been present, I would have been recorded in the following manner.

On rollcall No. 622, on a motion to table a measure, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 623, a bill to provide for increased international broadcasting activities to China, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 624, a bill to establish a program to provide assistance for programs of credit and other assistance for microenterprises in developing countries, and for other purposes, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 625, expressing the sense of Congress with respect to the discrimination by the German Government against members of minority religious groups, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 626, expressing the sense of Congress that the Government should fully participate in EXPO 2000 in the year 2000, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 627, a bill to amend the Illegal Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 628, a bill providing for consideration of certain resolutions in preparation for the adjournment of the first session, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 629, a bill concerning the statutes of Amtrak, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 630, on agreeing to the rule, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 631, on agreeing to the conference report for Foreign Operations, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 632, on agreeing to the resolution House Resolution 301, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 633, on ordering the previous question, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 634, on agreeing to the resolution House Resolution 326, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 635, a bill providing for the consideration of the bill H.R. 867, and the Senate amendment thereto, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 636, a rule to consider the Commerce, State, Justice Appropriations Act, H.R. 2267, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 637, passage of House Concurrent Resolution 137, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 638, an adjournment resolution, Senate Concurrent Resolution 68, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 639, a motion of recommit H.R. 2267, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 640, passage of H.R. 2267, I would have voted "aye."

TRIBUTE TO FORMER NEW HAVEN
MAYOR BIAGIO DI LIETO

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 13, 1997

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, tonight, in New Haven, CT, Biagio DiLiето will join with close friends and family to celebrate his 75th birthday. I have respected and admired Ben DiLiето for years, and am grateful for the opportunity to recognize a man who has dedicated his life to the city of New Haven.

Ben DiLiето began his public career in 1952. Serving as a police officer and later as police

chief, Ben quickly learned how to effectively address the needs of the city's residents. He interacted with the community and embraced its diversity. Ben was determined to make local government work for average citizens by addressing their needs on a personal level. Residents of New Haven came to know Ben DiLiето as a person who cared and would eagerly roll up his sleeves when hard work needed to be done. Ben earned the trust of New Haven's citizens and they elected him mayor in 1979.

Mayor DiLiето served for five consecutive terms. During those years, he was dedicated to understanding and meeting the needs of his constituents, particularly those in the greatest need. Mayor DiLiето worked diligently to ensure funding for social service programs that benefited children, elderly, and the disabled. He fought to obtain funding for emergency services and education. He championed the interests of people with real needs and sought real solutions. Indeed, it is difficult to measure the magnitude of Ben DiLiето's contributions to the city of New Haven, for he has played such a large role in our community. Ben DiLiето truly changed the face of our city.

On a personal note, Ben has always been a friend who is reliable and supportive, genuine and sincere. His commitment and diligence are the cornerstone of strong and effective local government, and his belief in public service has inspired me time and time again.

It is with great pleasure that I commend Ben DiLiето for a lifetime of achievement and service. I join his wife Rose, his family, and his many friends in wishing Ben a very happy 75th birthday. Ben truly embodies the best New Haven politics has to offer, and it is my deepest hope that we will have the benefit of his wisdom and kindness for many years to come.

THE SLAMMING PREVENTION AND
CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT OF
1997

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 13, 1997

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce H.R. 3050, the Slamming Prevention and Consumer Protection Act of 1997 to protect the American public from an unfair, unscrupulous and anticonsumer practice known as slamming. The perpetrators of this type of rascality switch a consumer's choice of long distance or local telephone service providers to their own service without the consumer's knowledge or consent. With this legislation, consumers finally will be able to fight back against slammers.

The measure will allow consumers to receive a full refund for any charges or shield them from liabilities incurred as a result of slamming. Consumers will be able to recover up to three times their actual damages for intentional violations, in addition to the monetary penalties this bill imposes upon any person or telephone carrier and their agents who slam. Additionally, the legislation sets a deadline for the Federal Communications Commission [FCC] and the Federal Trade Commission [FTC] to set rules that will protect consumers from slamming. The FCC rules will ensure that

any consumer switch of carrier is verified, while the FTC rules will prohibit unfair and deceptive acts and practices used in connection with switching a consumer's choice of service.

Slamming is a spreading epidemic. It is the single largest source of consumer complaints at the FCC. In 1995 alone, slamming represented more than a third of the complaints consumers registered at the FCC's Common Carrier Bureau. The number of slamming complaints processed by the FCC has nearly doubled from 1995 to 1997. Moreover, the number of slamming complaints processed by the FCC to date in this calendar year, 16,440, represent nearly half of all the complaints, 34,557, that have been processed by the agency this year.

The telephone industry estimates that approximately 2 million slamming incidents occur each year in the United States, with the bulk of these slams undetected or unreported by consumers. And there is no doubt these numbers will continue to grow unless adequate protections are put in place.

The current regulations against slamming are simply inadequate. There is little incentive for consumers to bring a lawsuit or file a complaint with the FCC. The higher phone bills borne by slammed consumers often pales in comparison to the cost of suing for recovery. This bill will correct that anomaly.

Moreover, under the current rules, if a consumer files a complaint with the FCC, he or she is only entitled to receive the difference between what was paid to the slammer and what would have been paid to the authorized carrier. In other words, lengthy involvement in an administrative proceeding yields too little, too late.

The FCC has been ineffective in protecting consumers from slammers. It has been nearly 2 years since the passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, and the agency still has not promulgated effective rules to protect consumers.

Despite the growing problem, the FCC has settled disputes with only a handful of slammers resulting in injunctions and fines. While these fines were paid into the U.S. Treasury, the consumer who was defrauded never received a dime.

The people in my home State of Michigan are particularly hard hit by slammers. Michigan ranks eighth overall in the number of State and Federal slamming complaints. But slamming respects no State lines.

Slammers prey upon victims of all kinds, although minorities and non-English speaking consumers are frequent targets. These slammers act in nefarious ways: sign here and you will be eligible for valuable and exciting prizes. The only thing valuable and exciting accrues to the slammer. The consumer unwittingly authorizes a change in their telephone carrier while under the impression that he or she has simply entered a contest. Or, the consumer receives a welcome package or other promotional mailing at home that says if you do not sign here or return the enclosed card, your service will be switched. Or telemarketing firms, driven by commissions, forge consumer authorizations or develop even wilder schemes to skim cash from the American public.

Mr. Speaker, we need tougher laws against slamming. The American public should have the tools to fight back against these bad actors. The Slamming Prevention and Consumer Protection Act of 1997 will provide those tools.