

**STATEMENT OF
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WE ARE HERE TODAY TO OUTLINE THE “TOP 5 EMERGING CELL PHONE ISSUES FOR 2009” THAT CONSUMERS NEED TO BE AWARE OF.

BEFORE I DO THAT ... LET ME EXPLAIN A BIT ABOUT CONSUMER ACTION ...

CONSUMER ACTION IS A NON-PROFIT, MEMBERSHIP-BASED CONSUMER EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION FOUNDED IN SAN FRANCISCO IN 1971. IT ALSO HAS OFFICES IN WASHINGTON, D.C. AND LOS ANGELES.

DURING ITS MORE THAN THREE DECADES OF OPERATIONS, CONSUMER ACTION HAS SERVED CONSUMERS NATIONWIDE BY ... ADVANCING CONSUMER RIGHTS ... REFERRING CONSUMERS TO COMPLAINT-HANDLING AGENCIES THROUGH ITS FREE HOTLINE ... PUBLISHING EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS IN CHINESE, ENGLISH, KOREAN, SPANISH, VIETNAMESE AND OTHER LANGUAGES, ... ADVOCATING FOR CONSUMERS IN THE MEDIA AND BEFORE LAWMAKERS, ... AND COMPARING PRICES ON CREDIT CARDS, BANK ACCOUNTS AND TELEPHONE SERVICES.

AND IT IS IN THAT CAPACITY THAT WE END UP SPENDING A LOT OF TIME HEARING ABOUT ... AND THINKING ABOUT ... CONSUMER CELL PHONE PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS.

WHAT WE ARE SAYING TODAY IS THAT RECESSION-HIT CONSUMERS NEED TO KEEP A WARY EYE ON FIVE EMERGING CELL PHONE ISSUES IN 2009 ...

YOU WILL HEAR IN A FEW MINUTES FROM SOL CARBONELL, ASSOCIATE, NATIONAL PRIORITIES, CONSUMER ACTION, WHO WILL OUTLINE THE FIVE AREAS OF CONCERN.

THEY INCLUDE THE LIMITS OF PRO-RATED TERMINATION PENALTY “RELIEF” ... RISING TEXTING FEES ... AUTOMATIC CONTRACT ROLLOVERS FOR LOST & DAMAGED PHONES ... AND CALLING CARD SWINDLES TARGETING IMMIGRANTS.

AS WE SURVEY THE SITUATION TODAY ... WHAT WE COME AWAY WITH IS THE CLEAR SENSE THAT RECESSION-PLAGUED CONSUMERS SADDLED WITH EXPENSIVE CONTRACT-BASED CELL PHONE SERVICE WON'T GET MUCH RELIEF ON PRICES IN 2009 AND MAY EVEN GET BURNED BY LITTLE-UNDERSTOOD AND POORLY DISCLOSED FEES AND PENALTIES.

IN THIS CLIMATE, IT'S NOT SURPRISING THAT BOTH CONSUMER REPORTS AND THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS RESEARCH AND ACTION CENTER HAVE CALLED IN RECENT MONTHS FOR PENNY-PINCHING CONSUMERS TO CONSIDER THE OPTION OF PREPAID CELL PHONES.

OBVIOUSLY, YOU HAVE TO FIND THE RIGHT PHONE FOR YOUR NEEDS AND CALLING PATTERNS.

BUT AS MORE AND MORE AMERICANS SHIFT THEIR PHONE USE TO CELL PHONES, THE COSTS AND PITFALLS ASSOCIATED WITH CONTRACT-BASED CELL PHONES BECOME CLEARER AND CLEARER.

IN THIS NEW YEAR, CONSUMERS WORRIED ABOUT RECESSION-DRIVEN PRESSURE ON THEIR JOBS AND POCKETBOOKS NEED TO BE MORE CAREFUL THAN EVER ABOUT AVOIDING PAYING MORE THAN IS NECESSARY FOR CELL PHONE SERVICE.

I AM GOING TO TURN THINGS OVER TO MY COLLEAGUE SOL CARBONELL TO WALK THROUGH THE FIVE KEY ISSUES WE ARE HIGHLIGHTING TODAY FOR CONSUMERS. I LOOK FORWARD TO TAKING YOUR QUESTIONS.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION TO MY OPENING REMARKS!