

**Maryland Office of People's Counsel
CONSUMER ALERT**

**AT&T Wireless Customers Are Entitled
To A Refund for Unauthorized Charges (Cramming)**

The Maryland Office of Attorney General, together with the Attorneys General of other states and the Federal Communications Commission, reached a settlement with AT&T, one of the wireless companies. They had alleged that AT&T Mobility had placed charges from third-party vendors on consumer mobile phone bills without the consumers' permission ("cramming"). The settlement requires AT&T Mobility to provide \$80 million for refunds to consumers who were billed for third-party services without their consent. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) will administer the refunds.

The charges may have been listed as "AT&T Monthly Subscriptions" on the wireless bill. The monthly charges were as high as \$9.99 per month. These charges frequently were for "premium" text message services – for example, horoscopes, trivia and sport scores. In some cases, third-party vendors offered gift cards as part of a contest and secured the consumer's mobile phone number to bill for unauthorized services.

Any AT&T Mobility customers (or former customer) who believe that they are the victims of cramming can submit a refund claim:

www.ftc.gov/att

If you have any questions about the refund process or your eligibility for a refund, you may contact the Claims Administrator:

1-800-819-9692

Consumer agencies have been urging federal or state action to stop the practice of "cramming" by wireless telephone companies for several years. These companies have allowed third-party companies to use the wireless bill to collect charges. Federal and state agencies have received thousands of consumer complaints that they are being billed for services or products they did not order or authorize. For individual consumers, it has been a time-consuming and frustrating ordeal to get their complaints addressed and the charges removed.

For more information:

<http://www.oag.state.md.us/Press/2014/100814.html>

Also check out the online comments of the People's Counsel on wireless cramming:

<http://programs.wypr.org/podcast/wireless-cramming-and-consumer-advocacy-wednesday-july-10-1-2-pm>

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