

	NEWS FROM		
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 3, 2009

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**Statement by the Honorable Bobby L. Rush, Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection
for hearing on
H.R. 3993, the “Calling Card Consumer Protection Act of 2009”**

December 3, 2009

WASHINGTON — “Good morning. The Subcommittee will now come to order. This hearing is being convened to consider H.R. 3993, the Calling Card Consumer Protection Act of 2009.

“The pre-paid calling card industry generates more than \$4 billion in annual revenues. It is a highly fragmented industry comprised of well-known and lesser known telecommunications companies that own and operate their own public and private networks, resellers of telecommunications services, and marketing firms and distributors who produce, brand, and deliver the cards to retail outlets and stores.

“I want to thank my friend, Mr. Engel, the gentleman from New York, for re-introducing this bill in the House. It would significantly improve the truthfulness of calling card advertisements and pave new avenues of recourse for millions of defrauded and vulnerable classes of consumers in this country.

“There’s a sucker born every minute” is reported to have been said by the great businessman and showman, P.T. Barnum. Those words set the theme for today’s hearing.

“Batches of fraudulent calling cards enter the stream of commerce daily. They misrepresent the amount of calling minutes that are supplied on the card and hide applicable fees and charges. At times,

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the cards may even provide substandard phone connections, ineffective PIN numbers, and non-functional or “always-busy” customer service contact information.

“H.R. 3993 would remedy many of these problems. It would require calling card providers and distributors to accurately, clearly, and conspicuously disclose all relevant and applicable information on the cards. Such disclosures would include contact information for the card service provider, number of minutes supplied on the card, and dollar value of the card.

“I would like to greet all of the witnesses who are here with us today. I thank them for taking the time to be here and look forward to hearing their views about H.R. 3993.

“Allow me to say that I am particularly pleased to greet, Mr. Alie Kabbah, who is a witness today. Mr. Kabbah is the Executive Director of the United African Organization. He has worked devotedly from the organization’s Chicago headquarters, on behalf of the more than 100,000 African men, women and children who now make their homes in Illinois.

“Again, thank you all so much for being here. With that, I yield back the balance of my time.”

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