

**CONNECTICUT CONSUMERS WIN AGAINST SNET/SBC'S
ATTEMPT TO CONTROL ALL LOCAL PHONE AND INTERNET SERVICES**

HARTFORD, March 5, 2003: "The Connecticut Internet Service Provider Association (CT ISPA) is celebrating the demise of one of SNET/SBC's main legislative initiatives for 2003 in the Connecticut General Assembly," stated Brad N. Mondschein, a Principal and telecommunications lawyer at the Firm and Executive Director of the CT ISPA. The bill, entitled **Senate Bill 826: An Act Concerning High Speed Internet Services Or Broadband Services**, if enacted, would have meant higher prices and less competition for Connecticut's consumers.

"I am relieved that SBC/SNET withdrew this anticompetitive bill," stated Chris Anatra, President of the Connecticut ISP Association, "If this bill had become law, as SBC/SNET proposed, then it would have been the Connecticut consumers who would have paid. I am proud that the CT ISP Association stood up against SBC/SNET in order to protect consumers' choices for their phone and Internet services. I am also glad that SBC/SNET has finally realized that competition in business always results in better service and lower prices for consumers."

SBC/SNET's Senate Bill 826 bill would have given SBC/SNET a virtual monopoly on future local phone services and current Internet services by allowing them to set higher rates for their wholesale services and facilities. The prices for many of these lines and facilities are formally set by the State DPUC. However, if this bill was enacted, SBC/SNET could have arbitrarily set higher rates for these lines without regulatory oversight. This would have forced Connecticut based small business Internet service providers economic hardship and potentially drove them out of the Internet business.

SBC/SNET's reason for pulling their Senate Bill 826 bill was due to the recent FCC ruling. However, "one wonders how this can be the case since no one has seen the FCC Order yet. Also, if that is true, why is SBC still pursuing similar bills in five other States? They lost a Committee vote yesterday in Missouri and still have another bill pending in Texas" said Mr. Mondschein.

Further, the FCC Order, no matter what it says, will be tied up in litigation for years to come. "Certainly, to get a state statute passed would have been better for SBC/SNET than the years of appeals and litigation over what the FCC intends from what promises to be the most confusing order in history" added Mr. Mondschein.

Regardless, the CT ISPA celebrates putting Connecticut consumers first and allowing them phone and Internet choices.

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The CT ISPA is comprised of Internet service providers and related companies that serve the Connecticut business and residential markets. The CT ISPA promotes the sharing of information, knowledge and expertise to benefit the Connecticut consumers.