

119TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 4557

To require telephone providers, cable television providers, direct broadcast satellite service providers, and internet providers to automatically refund their customers when their services are not working, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 18, 2026

Mr. LUJÁN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

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## A BILL

To require telephone providers, cable television providers, direct broadcast satellite service providers, and internet providers to automatically refund their customers when their services are not working, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Outage Refund Protec-  
5       tion Act”.

6       **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7       In this Act:

1           (1) CABLE PROVIDER.—The term “cable pro-  
2       vider” means a provider of cable service, as defined  
3       in section 3 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47  
4       U.S.C. 153), with more than 5,000 customers.

5           (2) DBS PROVIDER.—The term “DBS pro-  
6       vider” has the meaning given the term “provider of  
7       direct broadcast satellite service” in section 335 of  
8       the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 335)  
9       except that such provider shall have more than  
10      5,000 customers.

11          (3) INTERNET PROVIDER.—The term “internet  
12      provider” means a provider of broadband internet  
13      access service, as defined in section 801 of the Com-  
14      munications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 641), with more  
15      than 5,000 customers.

16          (4) TELEPHONE PROVIDER.—The term “tele-  
17      phone provider” means—

18              (A) a wireless carrier, as defined in section  
19              7 of the Wireless Communications and Public  
20              Safety Act of 1999 (47 U.S.C. 615b), with  
21              more than 5,000 customers;

22              (B) a wireline telephone service provider  
23              with more than 5,000 customers; and

24              (C) an interconnected or non-inter-  
25              connected VoIP service, as defined in section 3

1 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C.  
2 153), with more than 5,000 customers.

3 **SEC. 3. REFUNDS.**

4 (a) CABLE SERVICES.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—A cable provider shall auto-  
6 matically credit the billing statement of a customer  
7 if—

8 (A) the cable service of the cable provider  
9 is unavailable or is experiencing an outage or  
10 when the equipment provided to the customer  
11 by the cable provider to enable use of the cable  
12 service, including any software contained in or  
13 downloaded to the equipment is not operating  
14 correctly, for a period of 4 hours or more; or

15 (B) the customer terminates the cable  
16 service of the cable provider.

17 (2) CREDITS.—If required under paragraph  
18 (1), a credit shall be automatically issued to the cus-  
19 tomer for  $\frac{1}{30}$  of the monthly rate for each day the  
20 customer is not able to access the cable television  
21 network for a period of 4 hours or more.

22 (3) REFUND.—

23 (A) IN GENERAL.—If a customer termi-  
24 nates cable service with a cable provider, any  
25 credit issued under this section that exceeds the

1 amount due on a billing statement shall be  
2 issued to the customer not later than 30 days  
3 after the date of the outage in the form of a  
4 check in the customer's name, or by issuance of  
5 a no-fee prepaid debit card, or by electronic  
6 transfer, at the election of the customer, in the  
7 amount such credit exceeds such amount due.

8 (B) EXCEPTION.—A cable provider shall  
9 not be required to issue a refund under sub-  
10 paragraph (A) if the amount of the refund ex-  
11 ceeds the cost of disbursement under all meth-  
12 ods permitted under this section. A cable pro-  
13 vider may restrict the refund methods a cus-  
14 tomer can elect to the methods by which the  
15 amount of refund exceeds the cost of disburse-  
16 ment.

17 (b) SATELLITE SERVICES.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—A DBS provider shall auto-  
19 matically credit the billing statement of a customer  
20 if—

21 (A) the satellite service of the DBS pro-  
22 vider is unavailable or is experiencing an outage  
23 or when the customer's satellite is not operating  
24 correctly, for a period of 4 hours or more; or

1 (B) the customer terminates the satellite  
2 service of the DBS provider.

3 (2) CREDITS.—If required under paragraph  
4 (1), a credit shall be automatically issued to the cus-  
5 tomer for  $\frac{1}{30}$  of the monthly rate for each day the  
6 customer is not able to access the satellite television  
7 network for a period of 4 hours or more.

8 (3) REFUND.—

9 (A) IN GENERAL.—If a customer termi-  
10 nates satellite service with a DBS provider, any  
11 credit issued under this section that exceeds the  
12 amount due on a billing statement shall be  
13 issued to the customer not later than 30 days  
14 after the date of the outage in the form of a  
15 check in the customer's name, or by issuance of  
16 a no-fee prepaid debit card, or by electronic  
17 transfer, at the election of the customer, in the  
18 amount such credit exceeds such amount due.

19 (B) EXCEPTION.—A DBS provider shall  
20 not be required to issue a refund under sub-  
21 paragraph (A) if the amount of the refund ex-  
22 ceeds the cost of disbursement under all meth-  
23 ods permitted under this section. A DBS pro-  
24 vider may restrict the refund methods a cus-  
25 tomer can elect to the methods by which the

1 amount of refund exceeds the cost of disburse-  
2 ment.

3 (c) INTERNET SERVICES.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—An internet provider shall  
5 automatically credit the billing statement of a cus-  
6 tomer if the broadband internet access service of the  
7 internet provider is out of service or is experiencing  
8 an outage, for a period of 4 hours or more.

9 (2) CREDITS.—If required under paragraph  
10 (1), a credit shall be automatically issued for  $\frac{1}{30}$  of  
11 the monthly rate for each day the broadband inter-  
12 net access service is unavailable for a period of 4  
13 hours or more.

14 (3) REFUND.—

15 (A) IN GENERAL.—If a customer termi-  
16 nates broadband internet access service with an  
17 internet provider, any credit issued under this  
18 section that exceeds the amount due on a billing  
19 statement shall be issued to the customer not  
20 later than 30 days after the date of the outage  
21 in the form of a check in the customer's name,  
22 or by issuance of a no-fee prepaid debit card,  
23 or by electronic transfer, at the election of the  
24 customer, in the amount such credit exceeds  
25 such amount due.

1 (B) EXCEPTION.—An internet provider  
 2 shall not be required to issue a refund under  
 3 subparagraph (A) if the amount of the refund  
 4 exceeds the cost of disbursement under all  
 5 methods permitted under this section. An inter-  
 6 net provider may restrict the refund methods a  
 7 customer can elect to the methods by which the  
 8 amount of refund exceeds the cost of disburse-  
 9 ment.

10 (d) TELEPHONE SERVICES.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—A telephone provider shall  
 12 automatically credit the billing statement of a cus-  
 13 tomer on a per-line basis if the telephone service of  
 14 the telephone provider is out of service or is experi-  
 15 encing an outage, for a period of 4 hours or more.

16 (2) CREDITS.—If required under paragraph  
 17 (1), a credit shall be automatically issued for  $\frac{1}{30}$  of  
 18 the monthly rate for each day the customer is not  
 19 able to access telephone service of the telephone pro-  
 20 vider for a period of 4 hours or more.

21 (3) REFUND.—

22 (A) IN GENERAL.—If a customer termi-  
 23 nates telephone service with a telephone pro-  
 24 vider, any credit issued under this section that  
 25 exceeds the amount due on a billing statement

1 shall be issued to the customer not later than  
2 30 days after the date of the outage in the form  
3 of a check in the customer's name, or by  
4 issuance of a no-fee prepaid debit card, or by  
5 electronic transfer, at the election of the cus-  
6 tomer, in the amount such credit exceeds such  
7 amount due.

8 (B) EXCEPTION.—A telephone provider  
9 shall not be required to issue a refund under  
10 subparagraph (A) if the amount of the refund  
11 exceeds the cost of disbursement under all  
12 methods permitted under this section. A tele-  
13 phone provider may restrict the refund methods  
14 a customer can elect to the methods by which  
15 the amount of refund exceeds the cost of dis-  
16 bursement.

17 (e) PRE-PLANNED MAINTENANCE.—Subsections (a)  
18 through (d) shall not apply to service outages for pre-  
19 planned maintenance for which the provider has informed  
20 the affected customers in advance that service will be un-  
21 available.

22 (f) ENFORCEMENT.—Not later than 18 months after  
23 the date of enactment of this Act, the Federal Commu-  
24 nications Commission shall issue rules implementing the



1 requirements under this section, including penalties for  
2 failure to comply.

3 (g) PREEMPTION.—Nothing in this section or in the  
4 regulations prescribed under this section shall preempt  
5 any State law that imposes more restrictive intrastate re-  
6 quirements or regulations.

7 **SEC. 4. CUSTOMER SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—

9 (1) FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION.—

10 Not later than 18 months after the date of enact-  
11 ment of this Act, the Federal Communications Com-  
12 mission shall issue rules to require that each tele-  
13 phone provider, cable provider, DBS provider, and  
14 internet provider—

15 (A) extend cable customer service require-  
16 ments to direct broadcast satellite, voice, and  
17 broadband service, as applicable, including by  
18 making customer service accessible for those  
19 with disabilities;

20 (B) maintain recordings of customer serv-  
21 ice calls for not less than 1 year and release a  
22 recording of a customer service call to a cus-  
23 tomer or the customer's agent, upon request;  
24 and

1 (C) not associate any fee with the option  
2 to receive a call from a customer service rep-  
3 resentative at such time as a representative be-  
4 comes available.

5 (2) FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION.—

6 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18  
7 months after the date of enactment of this Act,  
8 the Federal Trade Commission shall issue rules  
9 with respect to telephone providers, cable pro-  
10 viders, DBS providers, and internet providers  
11 to—

12 (i) implement standards for missed  
13 service appointments; and

14 (ii) assess the burden of returning  
15 equipment for those with disabilities or in-  
16 dividuals who do not drive and if, in the  
17 determination of the Federal Trade Com-  
18 mission, the burden is sufficiently high, re-  
19 quire the provider to offer alternate means  
20 of return at no extra cost to such individ-  
21 uals.

22 (B) INJUNCTION AUTHORITY.—The Fed-  
23 eral Trade Commission shall have authority  
24 under section 13(b) of the Federal Trade Com-  
25 mission Act (15 U.S.C. 53(b)) to seek a pre-

1           liminary or permanent injunctions to enforce  
2           any requirement under subparagraph (A).

3       (b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-  
4 tion shall prohibit a State, or subdivision of a State, from  
5 imposing requirements higher than or in addition to the  
6 requirements imposed pursuant to this section.

7 **SEC. 5. SERVICE OUTAGES.**

8       As soon as possible following the activation of the  
9 Disaster Information Reporting System described in sec-  
10 tion 4.18 of title 47, Code of Federal Regulations, or any  
11 successor regulation, each broadband internet service pro-  
12 vider shall report service outages within the area of activa-  
13 tion to the Federal Communications Commission and shall  
14 include broadband internet access service outage informa-  
15 tion in each public report under the Disaster Information  
16 Reporting System.

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