



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daniel L. Squadron

# Squadron, Rozic, Chin Announce Fcc Agreement to Improve Verizon Lifeline Program

Daniel L. Squadron

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***Elected Officials Continue Push for Access to Multilingual Services and Better Customer Service***

NEW YORK – After urging the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Wireline Competition Bureau to revise Verizon’s Lifeline program to include multilingual notices and inform subscribers of recertification and service changes, State Senator Daniel Squadron, Assemblywoman Nily Rozic, and Council Member Margaret Chin

announced that the FCC has agreed to change the recertification process, improve the program, and better serve those with limited English proficiency.

"We called for help and the FCC is throwing a 'lifeline' to New York's most vulnerable," said **State Senator Daniel Squadron**. "I heard from dozens of constituents on this issue, especially low-income seniors, and our push shows what can happen when the community engages. But we must continue the fight to improve Lifeline's re-certification process, including language access. It's good news the FCC has answered our call -- it's essential Verizon respond to our concerns as well. I will continue working with Assemblymember Rozic, Councilmember Chin and the community to improve the Lifeline discount program."

"I am pleased that the FCC has agreed to change the way it runs the Lifeline program, which provides an invaluable service to low-income seniors," said **Assemblywoman Nily Rozic**. "I remain committed to ensuring that language is not a barrier for this essential service. There is still more to do on behalf of subscribers who continue to experience difficulty with the recertification process."

"We are gratified that the FCC responded to our concerns regarding the nearly 62,000 Lifeline subscribers in New York State who were dropped from the program," said **Council Member Margaret Chin**. "While the changes in the recertification process may prevent another sudden and unnecessary drop in enrollment, I am still concerned about the lack of language accessibility throughout the process. My elected colleagues and I will continue to push the FCC to provide recertification forms in languages other than English."

In a letter written to FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler, the legislators requested that the FCC and the Bureau work with third party provider Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) to revise the recertification guidelines and include multilingual notices informing subscribers of how the recertification process will affect their service. The FCC recently responded indicating that they have directed USAC to make changes to the recertification process such as sending automated texts or calls to the subscriber if he or she was not able to recertify their eligibility within the 30-day period. In doing so, subscribers will be informed that they have failed to complete the recertification process and will be given instructions on how to re-enroll in the program.

While further notification pending dis-enrollment and recertification procedures is a step in the right direction, the elected officials maintain that multilingual notices are critical to better serve current and future subscribers. In response to the request to include multilingual notices and revise the recertification process, the FCC has given USAC the directive to look into providing materials in languages other than English and Spanish, and it is examining how to improve service for consumers. Squadron, Rozic, and Chin are calling for immediate action on making these improvements.