

## Phone charge 'cramming' bill before state Senate

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Marion Daily Republican  
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Springfield, Ill. -

A bill cracking down on unauthorized phone charges passed out of committee Wednesday and now awaits consideration from the full Illinois Senate.

A practice called "cramming" - when a carrier charges a customer for a service never ordered - would be banned by SB 1421. Charges could be items like voice mail or membership fees. The fees often originate from a business separate from a phone company and generally can be found at the end of a phone bill.

Third-party companies would be forced to contact customers and verify charges before billing customers.

"This bill would better protect us from predatory companies looking to line their pockets with our hard-earned money," Citizens Utility Board Executive Director David Kolata said. "Consumers' phone bills are high enough already without paying fraudulent charges."

CUB advised those who may have been crammed to call the cramming company and ask the company to remove the charge. Customers also should call their phone company to dispute the extra charge.

If cramming continues, a complaint may be filed with the Illinois Attorney General's office.

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