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Ill. gov signs bill to protect telephone consumers

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CHICAGO — Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn has signed a bill aimed at protecting telephone consumers from a practice known as "cramming."

The bill signed into law Sunday prohibits third-party telecommunication providers from adding charges to phone bills without consumers' consent. The practice is known as "cramming."

The bill amends the Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Business Practices Act.

Phone providers can now charge consumers only if they meet certain conditions, including clearly disclosing the charges and getting consumers' consent.

The bill was supported by Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, industry groups and the AARP.

Quinn noted that the move comes on the eve of the 25th anniversary of the Citizens Utility Board, the consumer watchdog group he helped create.

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