

JOINT COMMITTEE ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS, UTILITIES, AND ENERGY

BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO.	H.3536
TITLE:	An Act regarding regulation of directory assistance
SPONSOR:	Rep. David K. Muradian, Jr.
COMMITTEE:	Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy
HEARING DATE:	May 6, 2025
PRIOR HISTORY:	2023-2024: Refiled as H.3198. Accompanied a study order, see H.4778. 2021-2022: Refiled as H.3355. Accompanied a study order, see H.5042. 2019-2020: Refiled as H. 2902. Accompanied a study order, see H.4405. 2017-2018: Refiled as H.1764. Accompanied a study order, see H.4651. 2015-2016: Refiled as H.2901 (filed by Rep. Muradian). Accompanied a study order, see H.4324. 2013-2014: Refiled as H.2966 (filed by Rep. George Peterson). Accompanied a new draft, see H.4021. 2011-2012: Filed as H.1771. Accompanied a new draft, see H.4228.

CURRENT LAW:

M.G.L. Chapter 159 Section 19A authorizes the Department of Telecommunications and Cable (DTC) to approve a rate, fare, toll, or charge for directory assistance service (i.e., providing a customer with the telephone number of another customer). The following requirements and limitations are also established in this section:

- Each customer is entitled to ten directory assistance calls per month for each business, residence, and private branch exchange trunk line to which they subscribe
- Directory assistance calls for telephone number which are non-listed shall not be included in the ten call allowance and shall not result in the customer incurring a cost
- DTC shall determine an appropriate reduced monthly allowance of directory assistance calls for each Centrex line to which a business customer subscribes. This reduced monthly allowance shall be equivalent to that provided to each private branch exchange trunk line.
- Customers who are certified handicapped or elderly by DTC shall be allowed an unlimited number of directory assistance calls, subject to other terms and conditions the DTC may create
- No rate, fare, toll, or charge for directory assistance services may be charged to users of coin operated telephones
- This section shall also apply to municipally-owned telecommunications services
- A telecommunications company that provides a service which provides information about customers in another state is not required to file a schedule with the department. DTC shall have no authority to review or approve such an offering.
- Each customer shall be entitled without charge to a directory for each area within the Commonwealth

SUMMARY:

This bill establishes that the DTC shall have no authority to review or approve a directory assistance service offered by any telecommunications company, whereas previously only those offering information about customers in another state were exempt.

It also establishes that no telecommunications company offering a directory assistance service shall be required to file a schedule with the DTC.

Lastly, it eliminates all of the requirements in existing statute EXCEPT the following:

- Customers who are certified handicapped or elderly by DTC shall be allowed an unlimited number of directory assistance calls, subject to other terms and conditions the DTC may create
- No rate, fare, toll, or charge for directory assistance services may be charged to users of coin operated telephones
- A telecommunications company that provides a service which provides information about customers in another state is not required to file a schedule with the department. DTC shall have no authority to review or approve such an offering.