

In re CenturyLink Sales Practices and Securities Litigation

Stoll Berne, led by attorneys [Keith Dubanevich](#), [Tim DeJong](#), and [Lydia Anderson-Dana](#) was appointed co-lead counsel along with [Bernstein Litowitz Berger & Grossmann LLP](#) (BLB&G) on behalf of lead plaintiff the State of Oregon by and through the Oregon State Treasurer and the Oregon Public Employee Retirement Board, on behalf of the Oregon Public Employee Retirement Fund (Oregon) in a securities class action against CenturyLink, Inc. and certain of its senior executives. The case involved claims pursuant to Sections 10(b) and 20(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 arising out of false and misleading statements concerning the Company's fraudulent billing practices from March 1, 2013 through July 12, 2017 (the Class Period).

During the Class Period, CenturyLink made a series of false and misleading statements, including that: its employees were subject to a strict code of ethics; that its sales and customer services personnel "promote[d] sales of services that [met] the needs of [CenturyLink's] customers"; and that its "customers value[d] the convenience and price discounts associated with receiving multiple services through a single company." The Company also reported strong revenue growth and sales, and represented that its financial condition was strong and growing.

In truth, CenturyLink incentivized unethical and unlawful behavior, including by allowing CenturyLink employees to add services, lines, and accounts for customers without their permission, resulting in millions of dollars in unauthorized charges to CenturyLink customers. Further, contrary to CenturyLink's representations, the Company's revenues and earnings growth were simply unsustainable because they were dependent upon improper and illegal conduct that subjected the Company to heightened regulatory scrutiny, governmental action, and significant fines and sanctions that could severely curtail its business.

Investors learned the true facts about the Company's business practices and financial condition through a series of corrective disclosures. First, on June 16, 2017, *Bloomberg* reported that a former CenturyLink employee filed a whistleblower lawsuit alleging that she was wrongfully terminated after notifying CenturyLink's CEO about the Company's improper sales practices, including secretly billing millions of dollars of unauthorized charges to CenturyLink customers. On June 19, 2017, *Bloomberg* reported that a consumer class action lawsuit against the Company had been filed on behalf of CenturyLink customers seeking up to billions of dollars in damages in connection with CenturyLink's unlawful billing practices. Then, on July 12, 2017, the Minnesota Attorney General announced that it had filed a lawsuit against CenturyLink alleging violations of state consumer protection laws after a year-long investigation which provided extensive detail concerning CenturyLink's billing misconduct. These revelations resulted in sharp declines in the prices of CenturyLink's securities, causing investors to incur substantial losses.

In the wake of these disclosures, on June 21, 2017, the first of several securities class actions was filed against the Company. On October 20, 2017, Magistrate Judge H. L. Perez-Montes of the Western District of Louisiana consolidated the related securities class actions and appointed Oregon as Lead Plaintiff, and Stoll Berne and BLB&G as Co-Lead Counsel.

In February 2018, the Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation transferred the consolidated actions to the District of Minnesota before the Honorable Michael J. Davis. On April 20, 2018, Judge Davis consolidated a subsequently-filed securities class action against CenturyLink under Oregon's leadership. On June 25, 2018, Oregon filed a consolidated securities class action complaint. In July 2019, Judge Davis denied Defendants' motion to dismiss. On September 14, 2020, Judge Davis certified the proposed class, appointed Oregon class representative, and appointed Stoll Berne class counsel along with Bernstein Litowitz. In November 2020, the parties reached a tentative settlement, including settlement amount of \$55,000,000 in cash. The Court approved the settlement in July 2021, and claims currently are being processed.

RECENT NEWS

September 15, 2020, Bloomberg Law: [CenturyLink Investors Get Class Status in Overbilling Litigation](#)

September 15, 2020, Reuters: [CenturyLink Shareholders in 'Cramming' Lawsuit Can Proceed as Class](#)

COURT:	United States District Court for the District of Minnesota
CASE NUMBER:	3:17-md-02795-MJD-KMM (MDL); 0:18-cv-00296-MJD-KMM (Securities)
JUDGE:	U.S.D.J. Michael J. Davis.; U.S.M.J. Katherine M. Menendez
CLASS PERIOD:	03/01/2013 – 07/12/2017
CASE CONTACTS:	Timothy DeJong , Keith Dubanevich , Lydia Anderson-Dana

- [Notice of \(I\) Pendency of Class Action and Proposed Settlement; \(II\) Settlement Fairness Hearing; and \(III\) Motion for an Award of Attorney's Fees and Litigation Expenses](#)
- [Proof of Claim and Release Form](#)
- [Plaintiffs' Motion for Final Approval of Class Action Settlement and Plan of Allocation](#) (June 16, 2021)
- [Notice of Hearing on Plaintiffs' Motion for Final Approval of Class Action Settlement and Plan of Allocation](#) (June 16, 2021)
- [Memorandum of Law in Support of Plaintiffs' Motion for Final Approval of Class Action Settlement and Plan of Allocation](#) (June 16, 2021)
- [Lead Counsel's Motion for an Award of Attorneys' Fees and Litigation Expenses](#) (June 16, 2021)
- [Notice of Hearing on Lead Counsel's Motion for an Award of Attorneys' Fees and Litigation Expenses](#) (June 16, 2021)
- [Memorandum of Law in Support of Lead Counsel's Motion for an Award of Attorneys' Fees and Litigation Expenses](#) (June 16, 2021)
- [Joint Declaration of Michael D. Blatchley and Keil M. Mueller in Support of \(I\) Plaintiffs' Motion for Final Approval of Class Action Settlement and Plan of Allocation and \(II\) Lead Counsel's Motion](#) (June 16, 2021)
- [Local Rule 7.1 Meet-and-Confer Statement Regarding Plaintiffs' Motion for Final Approval of Class Action Settlement and Plan of Allocation](#) (June 16, 2021)
- [Order Preliminarily Approving Settlement and Authorizing Dissemination of Notice of Settlement Pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 23\(e\)\(1\)](#) (March 18, 2021)
- [Stipulation and Agreement of Settlement](#) (February 2, 2021)
- [Memorandum of Law and Order Denying Defendants' Motion to Dismiss](#) (July 30, 2019)
- [Consolidated Securities Class Action Complaint](#) (June 25, 2018)

Case Team



Lydia Anderson-Dana
Attorney



Timothy DeJong
Attorney



Keith Dubanevich
Attorney