

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JONATHAN S. ADELSTEIN**

Re: Rules and Regulations Implementing the Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991 (CG Docket 02-278).

I am pleased to support this item. By adopting a National Do-Not-Call List, we arm American consumers with a powerful tool to protect their privacy. This is one of the most significant things that the FCC has ever done for American families. It will benefit consumers on a daily basis and in a very personal way. It's certainly the thing that people will notice as much as anything else we have done. We're restoring peace and quiet around the dinner table for everyone who asks for it, and plenty will ask, myself included. The public has sent a resounding directive telling us that uninvited telephone solicitations are not merely a distraction but are driving customers away from their phones. Consumers have also made clear that our prior rules – without a national Do-Not-Call List – do not work to their satisfaction. And Congress has made its wishes clear by adopting the Do-Not-Call Act which authorized the establishment of the national list. My hope is that our actions here will allow the American public to once again view their phones as a useful connection to the world rather than a source of nightly harassment.

At the same time, we balance the interests of consumer privacy alongside the commercial speech interests of those businesses who use the telephone to offer goods and services and the interests of those consumers willing to receive such offers. The record bears out that many consumers find telephone solicitations valuable. According to industry estimates, outbound telemarketing generates between 300 and 600 billion dollars in annual revenues. So, I am sensitive to the potential impact of these rules on the businesses that rely on telephones to reach their customers. I have particular concern about the local telephone industry, where the practical effect of our established business relationship exemption may have an uneven impact on competitors. Nonetheless, Congress has captured the will of the people – certainly, as reflected in our record – when it directed us to “maximize the consistency” of our rules with the newly-adopted FTC national list. Congress did not explicitly provide for particular treatment of the local telephone industry in the Do-Not-Call Act, but I believe that this area warrants our special attention and monitoring.

So that our rules are no more extensive than necessary and because American consumers each hold different views about the value of telephone solicitations, we adopt a suite of options from which customers can choose the approach that best serves their needs. Under our rules, customers may sign up for the new national Do-Not-Call List or, alternatively, may continue to receive telemarketing calls and sign up for the company-specific lists when they no longer wish to hear from a particular company. When customers sign up for the national list, they still have the ability to grant express permission to receive calls from particular companies. So our rules are flexible enough to allow consumers to choose the best option for them.

We have a special obligation to remain vigilant in our implementation of these rules. Congress has asked us to report to it annually. I look forward to those reports with the optimism that we have adopted measures that will put American consumers back in control of their phones.