



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONER JONATHAN S. ADELSTEIN ON BROKERING OF PERSONAL TELEPHONE RECORDS

I am alarmed by reports that data brokers are obtaining and selling customers' personal telephone records without the customers' consent or knowledge. These records can include some of the most private personal information about an individual. Finding out who people are calling and for how long can be like picking someone's brain about their friends, plans or business dealings. Congress recognized the sensitivity of this information in the Telecommunications Act of 1996 when it prohibited phone companies from using or disclosing certain proprietary customer information without the customer's approval. It charged the FCC with enforcing this privacy protection.

I appreciate the recent efforts of phone companies to take action against these data brokers. Still, the Commission must also take immediate steps to ensure that we have strong consumer privacy rules in place and that phone companies are employing effective safeguards to shield this data from harm. The FCC's Enforcement Bureau has launched an investigation into these troublesome data brokering practices, and I support swift action against carriers that have not complied with our existing rules and procedures. In addition, a petition for rulemaking on enhanced consumer data protection standards filed by the Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC) in August 2005 could be an appropriate vehicle for tightening our rules. I support quick action by the Commission to address any abuses of this private information.

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