

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
BANKING
DEMOCRATIC POLICY & COMMUNICATIONS
FINANCE
JUDICIARY
RULES

August 21, 2011

1176

The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr.
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

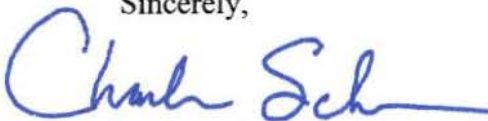
Dear Attorney General Holder and Chairman Genachowski,

I write today to express my concerns about the theft of wireless devices. With the advent of smart phones, theft of handheld devices has grown dramatically in the past few years. American carriers who use GSM technology exacerbate this problem by only disabling SIM cards in phones. In the United Kingdom, carriers have the ability to disable handsets based on numbers such as IMEIs, serial numbers, or MEIDs. As you may know, Verizon already uses this on its CDMA network.

I therefore ask you to study the system in place in the United Kingdom, in which GSM carriers are able to deactivate handsets based on serial numbers, and help individual carriers implement a similar system that maximizes both theft deterrence and network security. I also ask that you report back to me about your ability to oversee such a system and whether any law is required to ensure the security and privacy of wireless customers. While this solution will not eliminate theft, it will ensure that thieves will be selling inactive phones that have little value to customers. British telecommunication companies have even ensured that deactivated devices are still able to call 911 in case of emergencies.

I thank you for your attention to this matter and look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Charles Schumer
United States Senator