

Remarks of Commissioner Mignon Clyburn

Robocall Strike Force Meeting

Washington, D.C.

October 26, 2016

Just over 60 days ago, at the peak of the August vacation season, we came together in this very room and made a joint pledge to the American people that we would crack down on those annoying robocalls, and bring relief to millions across this country.

In the weeks that followed, one press headline described our efforts as an: “Elite ‘Robocall Strike Force’ Being Formed to Protect You From Scams.” Is this a signal that the FCC finally met the world of Star Wars? I sure hope so and for good reason.

In September, Americans received 2.61 billion robocalls, and guess which city topped the list for most robocalls received? According to the YouMail Robocall Index, yes there is a Robocall Index, that distinction went to Atlanta, Georgia with 115.7 million robocalls. In my home area code of 843, 19.4 million robocalls were received last month – and that equates to approximately 14.3 calls per person.

So I say kudos to the more than 30 companies who are participating in the Robocall Strike Force. And I am proud to report that the working groups have not been idle. They have met at least twice a week for the past two months – and the short and long-term deliverables that were presented today, are a testament to this.

On the surface, the challenge seems fairly simple: Unwanted robocalls, which appear to be originating from a known number, are made to consumers who just want them to stop. We can talk about authentication, signaling, certificate governance, and other technical functions, but that is not my focus, nor is it the chief concern voiced by millions of consumers, who receive these calls every day. They just want easily implemented, workable solutions to end this practice, and by joining forces, we are on the cusp of achieving this.

During my #ConnectingCommunities tour, which wrapped up last week, the issue of robocalls regularly arose, even when it was not the topic of the scheduled visit. Thankfully, there are companies like Hiya, a startup I visited in Seattle, that are implementing and empowering consumers with the tools needed to block unwanted calls. Today, we are applauding those who have stepped up to the plate, with solutions. Coupled with the recommendations of the Strike Force, the potential to stop the millions of robocalls that disrupt far too many family dinners and my down time is within reach.

I want to once again thank the Strike Force members, the FCC staff liaisons, and the co-chairs of the four Strike Force working groups, for responding to our call to action and turning around, in just a short window of time, a plan that promises to deliver real relief to consumers.