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For Immediate Release

FCC SEEKS RELIABLE CALL AUTHENTICATION SYSTEM

Verifying Callers Would Help Stop Many Unwanted and Fraudulent Calls

WASHINGTON, July 13, 2017 – In its latest step to combat annoying and malicious robocalls, the Federal Communications Commission is seeking public comment on standards that will help differentiate legitimate phone calls from those that attempt to trick consumers through caller ID spoofing.

The Commission will explore ways to set up a reliable system to verify that a phone call is really coming from the phone number that it claims to be. Many malicious robocallers hide their true originating phone number in order to evade call-blocking or filtering tools and trick consumers about a call's true source. A reliable authentication system would help confront this behavior and strengthen call-blocking. Some carriers and third-party developers today offer consumers various services to block or filter unwanted calls. Improved call authentication would provide another tool to identify spoofing and improve the effectiveness of these services.

Unwanted robocalls and telemarketing calls are the number one consumer complaint received by the Commission each year, totaling around 200,000 each year – or around 60 percent of the total consumer complaints. Today's action, formally a Notice of Inquiry, asks important legal, policy and technological questions about call authentication frameworks. The Commission seeks public comment on these questions. Following this public comment period, the Commission may move forward on further actions such as rulemakings.

Today's phone networks involve many more providers and systems than when they were designed and built. These changes have benefits for consumers but also create new challenges. One challenge is how carriers and their customers can verify that a call came from the caller it claims to be when that call has passed through various carriers and technologically diverse networks.

A recent report from an industry-led robocall initiative included a request for the Commission to work with the private sector to accelerate adoption of network-wide standards to verify and authenticate caller ID for calls carried over Internet Protocol (IP) networks. Adoption of universal standards could result in much-improved reliability of caller ID, allowing consumers to again trust the caller ID information they see when receiving calls. To review the industry-led robocall group's April report to the FCC, go here: <https://go.usa.gov/x5NKZ>

Action by the Commission July 13, 2017 by Notice of Inquiry (FCC 17-89). Chairman Pai,

Commissioners Clyburn and O’Rielly approving and issuing separate statements.

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