



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

March 1, 2019

The Honorable Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senate
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Merkley:

I agree that illegal robocalls are a scourge, and that's why I have made combatting them the Commission's top consumer protection priority. I am committed to a multi-pronged attack on the problem—through rulemaking, enforcement actions, consumer education, and collaboration with other government agencies and industry.

During my tenure as FCC Chairman, I've had the opportunity to set the agenda for 25 monthly meetings. At almost half of those meetings, we've voted on measures to fight unlawful robocalls and caller ID spoofing. We've taken action to cut off robocalls and spoofing at the source, including authorizing carriers to stop certain spoofed robocalls, pursued the creation of a reassigned numbers database, and pushed industry to establish a robust call-authentication framework.

Pursuant to Congressional direction in RAY BAUM's Act, at the Commission's February Open Meeting, we adopted a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that proposes to modify the FCC's Truth in Caller ID rules. The changes proposed would extend the rules' reach to include communications originating outside the United States and expand the rules' scope to include text messages and other voice services. This item is but one part of the Commission's multi-pronged effort to combat unwanted and illegal caller ID spoofing.

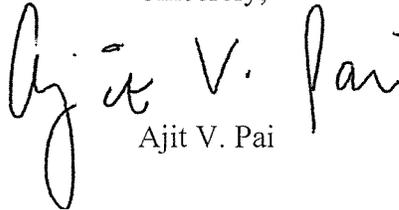
Also last month, I called on carriers that are lagging behind on efforts to develop and implement a robust call authentication system to combat illegal caller ID spoofing. Call authentication is the best way to ensure that consumers can answer their phones with confidence. It will help consumers know when a phone call is fraudulent before they pick up, thus eroding the ability of scam artists to use false caller ID information to trick vulnerable Americans into answering their phones when they shouldn't. With a robust framework in place, consumers and law enforcement alike will be able to more readily identify the source of illegally spoofed robocalls and reduce their impact.

I expect large telephone operators will take all the steps needed to ensure that system is on track to become operational in 2019. If they do not act promptly, the Commission stands ready to take regulatory action to ensure widespread deployment to meet this important technological milestone.

In addition, the Commission continues to aggressively enforce the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) as well as the Truth in Caller ID Act. We have sent a very clear message that those who engage in illegal robocall schemes will pay a price—assessing over \$245 million in proposed fines against illegal robocallers and caller ID spoofers. The FCC coordinates with the Federal Trade Commission on investigations into violations of our Do Not Call rules, and we work together on consumer education programs. The Commission also works with federal and state agencies to share information and resources that can be used to investigate unwanted calls, such as the Department of the Treasury, Department of Justice, and Department of Homeland Security.

I appreciate your interest in this matter, and I have attached a recent staff report on our work for your review. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "A".

Ajit V. Pai