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**For Immediate Release**

**COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS RELEASES RESPONSES TO HIS INQUIRY INTO THE AVAILABILITY OF FREE, DEFAULT ROBOCALL BLOCKING SERVICES**

WASHINGTON, July 11, 2019: Today, FCC Commissioner Geoffrey Starks publicly released responses he received from major voice service providers to letters he sent in June seeking details about their plans to offer free, default robocall blocking services to consumers. The following statement can be attributed to Commissioner Starks:

“I appreciate the timely responses to my letters. Transparency is critical to good policymaking, so I am publicly releasing the complete responses of the carriers – so that everyone can read their responses in their own words. Despite historically clamoring for new tools, it does not appear that all providers have acted with haste to deploy opt-out robocall blocking services. The Commission spoke clearly: we expect opt-out call blocking services to be offered to consumers for free. Reviewing the substance of these responses, by and large, carriers’ plans for these services are far from clear. In our action last month, the Commission committed to studying this issue and delivering a progress report within a year. If we find that carriers are acting contrary to our expectations, we will commence a rulemaking. To that end, as I noted in my letters, I expect to be updated by carriers as progress is made on offering free call blocking services and recommend that carriers not stop until the job is finished. The sooner, the better.”

In June 2019, Commissioner Starks voted on a Declaratory Ruling and Third Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that clarified that voice service providers could, without violating Commission rules, deploy call blocking offered to consumers by default on an informed opt-out basis. The action expressed the Commission’s expectation that these services would be offered to consumers for free and, at Commissioner Starks’ request, directed Commission staff to prepare reports on the state of deployment of robocall blocking tools, including whether fees are being charged for the services. The reports will be submitted to the Commission no later than 12 months, for the first report, and 24 months, for the second report, after the publication of the item in the Federal Register. Following delivery of the first report, the Commission will assess whether consumers are being charged and, if so, will seek comment on rules requiring providers that offer these services to do so for free.

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