



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

April 7, 2020

The Honorable Martha McSally  
United States Senate  
B40D Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McSally:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to curb robocalls that originate from overseas. I agree with you that these unconscionable illegal calls pose a serious threat. That's why we are taking all necessary steps to protect the public—particularly from new robocall campaigns attempting to carry out coronavirus/COVID-19-related fraud and scams.

One part of our strategy has involved taking an aggressive approach to enforcement. For instance, last month, the Commission partnered with the Federal Trade Commission, the U.S. Department of Justice, and USTelecom's Industry Traceback Group to tackle the threat of COVID-19 robocall scams. These efforts are already bearing fruit. Just last Friday, April 3, the FCC's Enforcement Bureau and the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection issued demand letters to three gateway providers that were facilitating COVID-19 robocall scams originating overseas. The letters warned these gateway providers that they had to cut off these calls or face serious consequences. Specifically, unless these gateway providers stopped bringing these calls into the United States in the next 48 hours, other phone companies would be able to begin blocking *all* traffic from these gateway providers' networks. The FCC and FTC worked closely with the U.S. Department of Justice on this first-of-its-kind effort to stop scammers from reaching American consumers, and I am pleased to report that all three of these gateway providers have informed us that they have cut off these scam calls.

We previously engaged with gateway providers towards our goal of ending illegal robocalls. The Enforcement Bureau sent letters in February to seven companies that allow international robocalls into U.S. networks, seeking their support to trace back the originators of the illegal spoofed foreign robocalls. These companies are uniquely situated to assist both government and industry efforts. In addition to asking them to take measures to prevent the flow of illegal traffic into the U.S., the Enforcement Bureau also asked for specific information from these companies about their facilitation of international robocalls. In response, providers indicated that they used call analytics and "know-your-customer" practices to detect and mitigate illegal calls and that they were in the process of implementing STIR/SHAKEN. The Enforcement Bureau has been monitoring and will continue to monitor these companies for their cooperation with public and private efforts to identify the source of illegal foreign robocalls. It stands ready to take swift and decisive actions to stop unwanted and unlawful traffic. And we will remain close partners with the DOJ and the FTC as we carry on our efforts to end the menace of illegal robocalls.

Additionally, almost immediately upon learning about these new robocall scams related to the coronavirus pandemic, our Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau created and launched the “COVID-19 Consumer Warnings and Safety Tips” webpage and released a Consumer Alert to increase awareness. Our webpage, [www.fcc.gov/covid-scams](http://www.fcc.gov/covid-scams), is being updated as new scams emerge, and we hope that consumers will continue to use it to protect themselves from these illegal calls.

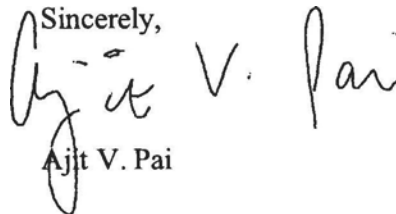
Those are not the only actions that the Commission has been taking to combat all types of illegal robocalls. We’ve used a multi-pronged regulatory approach to tackle the problem head-on. Among other actions, we have amended our rules to allow telephone providers to block suspected malicious and illegal calls by default, taken aggressive enforcement action against these robocall violators, and applied anti-spoofing prohibitions to international robocalls. Further, we have issued rules to establish a process to select a private-led consortium to trace back the origin of suspected unlawful robocalls, as required by the TRACED Act.

Also, on March 31, the Commission adopted a Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking regarding caller ID authentication. The Order adopts rules requiring voice service providers to implement the caller ID authentication technology known as STIR/SHAKEN. This technology enables phone companies to verify the caller ID information that is transmitted with a call and will help them identify calls with illegally spoofed caller ID information before those calls reach Americans’ phones. I’m pleased my fellow commissioners joined me in taking this significant step toward ending the scourge of spoofed robocalls—a step supported by Congress’s passage of the TRACED Act.

In addition, as part of the TRACED Act, Congress directed the Commission to issue a set of best practices for voice service providers to use to ensure that the calling party is accurately identified. FCC staff recently charged the North American Numbering Council, a federal advisory committee of experts I appointed, with recommending a list of best practices responsive to Congress’s direction, including best practices that providers could use specifically for knowing the identity of subscribers located abroad. Finally, as part of the draft Further Notice to implement caller ID authentication, we are also seeking comment on our proposal to impose STIR/SHAKEN requirements on gateway providers and whether there are other rules we should consider to combat illegal robocalls that originate from abroad.

Thank you for your interest in this important issue. I am confident that we will see meaningful relief from robocalls as we implement caller ID authentication and other TRACED Act provisions and as we continue our ongoing efforts with industry, state officials, our Federal partners, and consumers.

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,  
  
Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

April 7, 2020

The Honorable Kyrsten Sinema  
United States Senate  
317 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Sinema:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to curb robocalls that originate from overseas. I agree with you that these unconscionable illegal calls pose a serious threat. That's why we are taking all necessary steps to protect the public—particularly from new robocall campaigns attempting to carry out coronavirus/COVID-19-related fraud and scams.

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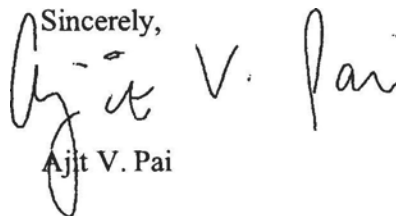
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Sincerely,  
  
Ajit V. Pai



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WASHINGTON

April 7, 2020

The Honorable Susan Collins  
United States Senate  
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Collins:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to curb robocalls that originate from overseas. I agree with you that these unconscionable illegal calls pose a serious threat. That's why we are taking all necessary steps to protect the public—particularly from new robocall campaigns attempting to carry out coronavirus/COVID-19-related fraud and scams.

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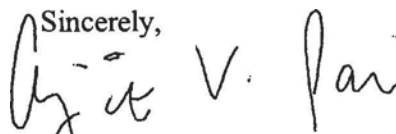
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