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For Immediate Release

**FCC, FTC DEMAND ROBOCALL-ENABLING SERVICE PROVIDERS
CUT OFF COVID-19-RELATED INTERNATIONAL SCAMMERS**

***Agencies Target Companies Routing Scam Robocalls to Consumers about Fake
COVID-19-Related Refunds, Loan Reductions, and Social Security Threats***

WASHINGTON, May 20, 2020—The Federal Communications Commission and Federal Trade Commission today demanded that gateway providers allowing COVID-19 pandemic-related scam robocalls into the United States cut off this traffic or face serious consequences. This is the second such action taken during the pandemic, following a successful push in April with similar letters from the agencies that led to the termination of other robocallers' access to American phone networks.

“We expect nothing less from these providers than shutting down this scam robocall traffic,” said FCC Chairman Ajit Pai. “These companies can access our nation’s phone networks to provide legitimate services to consumers and businesses, not to facilitate floods of scam robocalls. They need to stop this traffic and not let it back on their networks—or face losing their access to the American phone system.”

“We never tolerate illegal robocallers, but it’s especially abhorrent when scammers exploit pandemic-related anxiety,” said FTC Chairman Joe Simons. “These VoIP providers must stop allowing illegal scam calls to reach consumers.”

The [letters](#) sent today give the companies 48 hours to cut off these scam robocalls. If they do not, the FCC expects that domestic providers will begin blocking all calls from them. The FCC and FTC will also consider other enforcement steps should the companies not comply.

The scam robocall campaigns routed to American consumers through these companies include:

- *Fake COVID-19 Refunds.*—The scam robocall says: “We cannot provide services due to COVID-19 but you have been charged \$399. Press 1 to claim a refund.” **RSCom of Knoxville, Tennessee and Aurora, Ontario**, is a gateway provider and is currently allowing these fake COVID-19 related refund scam calls into the country from the United Kingdom.
- *Social Security Administration COVID Scam.*—The scam robocall says: “This is a call from [the] Social Security Administration; during this difficult time of coronavirus, we have to suspend your SS account.” **PTGi Carrier Services of Washington, DC** is apparently responsible for this and another coronavirus robocall campaign, reportedly originating in Germany.
- *Loan Interest Rate Reduction Scams.*—The scam robocall campaigns state: “Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, you may be entitled to no payments on your mortgage, credit card debt or medical bills”; “Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, you may be

entitled to no payments on your student loans”; and “Due to the lockdown, we are helping people to pay with 0% interest rates.” **Intelepeer of San Mateo, California** is facilitating this robocall traffic from overseas.

The FCC and its federal partners have identified these providers as the entryways for these robocall campaigns into American phone networks. The agencies work closely with the Industry Traceback Group, a consortium of phone companies that help officials track down suspect calls, managed by the trade association USTelecom. The Commission is also in the process of codifying this process, per the recently enacted TRACED Act. In addition to today’s letters to gateway providers, the FCC and FTC also wrote to USTelecom to ask its members to begin blocking calls from these providers if the flood of robocalls is not cut off within 48 hours.

Following the April [letters](#) from the FCC’s Enforcement Bureau and the FTC’s Bureau of Consumer Protection, three gateway providers stopped their facilitation of COVID-19-related scam robocalls within 24 hours. The FCC and its traceback partners continue to monitor all those providers should they again allow such traffic.

The FCC has been warning consumers throughout the COVID-19 pandemic of related robocall scams. These warnings are available at: <https://www.fcc.gov/covid-scams>.

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