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For Immediate Release

**FCC APPROVES NEW RULES TO ENCOURAGE BLOCKING OF
ILLEGAL AND UNWANTED ROBOCALLS TO PROTECT CONSUMERS**

***Commission Also Seeks Comment on Whether Phone Companies Should Be Obligated
to Better Police Their Networks Against Illegal Robocalls***

WASHINGTON, July 16, 2020—The Federal Communications Commission today adopted rules to further encourage phone companies to block illegal and unwanted robocalls before they reach consumers. To encourage the blocking of scam robocalls and maliciously spoofed telemarketing campaigns, and continue the Commission’s implementation of the Pallone-Thune Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act, the rules offer companies two safe harbors from liability for the unintended or inadvertent blocking of wanted calls, thus eliminating a concern that kept some companies from implementing robust robocall blocking efforts.

The first safe harbor protects phone companies that use reasonable analytics, including caller ID authentication information, to identify and block illegal or unwanted calls from liability.

The second safe harbor protects providers that block call traffic from bad actor upstream voice service providers that pass illegal or unwanted calls along to other providers, when those upstream providers have been notified but fail to take action to stop these calls.

These safe harbors are meant to provide further assurance to phone companies and allow them to strengthen their efforts in the battle against illegal and unwanted robocalls. In its decision today, the Commission continues to emphasize that emergency calls should never be blocked.

Through a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, the Commission asks about additional steps to protect consumers from robocalls and better inform them about provider blocking efforts. The Further Notice specifically seeks comment on whether to obligate phone companies to better police their networks against illegal calls, and whether to require them to provide information about blocked calls to consumers for free. In addition, the Further Notice seeks comment on notification and effective redress mechanisms for callers when their calls are blocked, and on whether measures are necessary to address the mislabeling of calls.

Protecting American consumers from illegal and unwanted calls remains the FCC’s top consumer protection priority. Today’s action will continue to advance the Commission’s multi-pronged approach to stopping illegal and unwanted robocalls, and continue to build on the foundation established by previous Commission actions, including:

- A [2017 Call Blocking Report and Order](#) allowing phone companies to block at the network level calls using invalid, unallocated, or unused numbers and numbers on a “Do Not Originate” list.
- A [2019 Call Blocking Declaratory Ruling](#) clarifying that phone companies could immediately offer call blocking services by default based on reasonable analytics to new and existing customers so long as an opportunity to opt out from the service is provided.
- A [June 2020 Staff Report on Call Blocking](#) finding that call blocking tools are now widely available to consumers at no or low cost.

Action by the Commission July 16, 2020 by Third Report and Order, Order on Reconsideration, and Fourth Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 20-96). Chairman Pai, Commissioners O’Rielly, Carr, Rosenworcel, and Starks approving and issuing separate statements.

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*This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).*