

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

Re: *In the Matter of Thomas Dorsher; ChariTel Inc; OnTel Inc; and ScammerBlaster Inc*, Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture, File No. EB-TCD-21-00032187

We continue to be faced with egregious actions by bad actors using illegal robocalls. And, this one is particularly striking. Here, Thomas Dorsher and his companies engaged in willful and repeated conduct that violated federal law and the Commission's rules. In less than three months, Dorsher placed more than nine million robocalls to toll free numbers. Each of these calls generated income for Dorsher through an access stimulation agreement at the expense of toll free subscribers, which he used to fund dangerous telephone denial of service attacks. These types of attacks are highly hazardous as they disable telephone networks and can disrupt critical emergency services.¹

Dorsher has not only acknowledged that he made these robocalls to fund his other illegal behavior, but, when confronted by those affected by these robocalls, Dorsher threatened them, reasoning that he was beyond the reach of the law. His blatant disregard for the welfare of consumers on top of his illegal activities justifies the significant fine we adopt today.

I therefore support this item. Stopping illegal robocalls is the Commission's top consumer protection priority, and we must remain aggressive in the fight to bring consumers relief from these harmful intrusions. Additionally, we closely monitor 911 outages of all types, including for cyberattacks on our telephone networks. We must remain diligent and send a message that these denial of service attacks cannot occur.

As I have said repeatedly, there are numerous hurdles to finding these bad actors, and bringing them to account for violations of our rules. That we continue to pursue these cases demonstrates the Commission's resolve to protecting consumers, and should drive deterrence – a hallmark of any justified enforcement action.

¹ Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, Cyber Risks to 911, Telephony Denial of Service, https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Cyber%20Risks%20to%20911%20DoS_6.4.2020%20-%20%28508c%29_1.pdf (last visited July 13, 2022).