

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

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June 23, 2023

The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel
Chairwoman
Federal Communication Commission
45 L Street Northeast
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairwoman Rosenworcel,

Too many Americans, particularly our senior citizens, are taken advantage of by bad actors and scammers with robocalls and, more prevalent in recent years, robotexts. Instances of robocall and robotext fraud have skyrocketed despite ongoing efforts by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) and Congress to address this issue plaguing consumers. So far, in 2023, it is estimated that there are over 300,000 robotexts sent every single minute to Americans across the country and over 3 billion robotexts are sent every week, according to Robokiller, an application company working to prevent spam messages. In April 2023 alone, Americans received over 13 billion robotexts.¹ These numbers only continue to rise year after year. In 2022, the American public received over 225 billion robotexts, which marked a 157% increase from 2021 and a 307% increase from 2020.²

As you know, data breaches and data selling have made once private information, like cell phone numbers, public on the dark web for hackers and bad actors to access, leaving countless Americans open to being scammed. The FCC recommends consumers do not “respond to texts from unknown numbers, or any others that appear suspicious” and “never share personal or financial information by text,” yet the texts continue to come.³ Once appearing as obvious spoofs, robotexts are becoming more sophisticated and look like genuine texts from real people.

According to the Better Business Bureau, the sophisticated robotexts can be more convincing than traditional phishing texts and can use AI chat bots to generate responses in the interaction to get critical information from the recipients.⁴ Even generic spam texts are still generating positive interactions for scammers. In 2022, Americans were scammed out of an estimated \$20 billion as a result of robotext scams, often from texts posing as their banks or fake “package updates” from Amazon or USPS that are phishing scams.⁵ By collecting this

¹ <https://www.robokiller.com/spam-text-insights-introduction>

² <https://www.robokiller.com/robokiller-2022-phone-scam-report>

³ <https://www.fcc.gov/robotext-scams-rise>

⁴ <https://www.bbb.org/article/scams/26053-bbb-scam-alert-wrong-number-text-message-could-be-a-scam-bot>

⁵ <https://www.robokiller.com/robokiller-2022-phone-scam-report>

information, scammers can steal the identity of vulnerable Americans or sell their information to the highest bidder who will then abuse this information.

In 2019, Congress passed the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act, which aimed to cut down on the amount of robocalls Americans received from this same type of actors. The TRACED Act requires carriers to offer call-authentication technology to all customers with no additional fee, provide opt-in and opt-out of robocall blocking, and allows the FCC to fine individuals behind robocalls.⁶ In March 2023, the FCC adopted its first rules focusing on robotexts, blocking texts from phone numbers that are “unlikely to transmit text messages” and requiring wireless providers to establish a point of contact for text senders.⁷ Given the persistent volume of robocalls and robotexts, and their impact on consumers, especially seniors, it clear that additional action is needed.

We urge you to use every tool at your disposal to crack down on these bad actors that take advantage of working Americans. In that vein, could you please answer the following questions and report back on your efforts to combat these robocalls and robotexts:

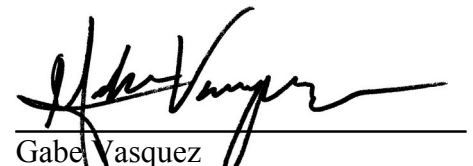
- What next steps is the FCC taking to help regulate and decrease robocalls and robotexts?
- Are there any noted gaps in coverage with the TRACED Act, such as international calls, that could be addressed with Congressional action?
- Can programs designed for the TRACED Act or intergovernmental cooperation with the FTC and the Do Not Call registry apply to robotext recipients to ensure text messages see some sort of authentication process?
- What else can the administration do to address the proliferation of robotexts?

We look forward to working with you and the administration to address and hopefully end once and for all the scourge of robocalls and robotexts. Thank you for your prompt attention and response to this matter.

Sincerely,



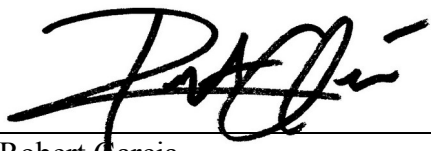
Eric Sorensen
Member of Congress



Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress

⁶ <https://pallone.house.gov/media/press-releases/pallone-s-anti-robocalls-bill-overwhelmingly-passes-house>

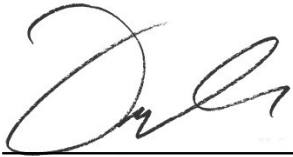
⁷ <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-391800A1.pdf>



Robert Garcia
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Troy Carter
Member of Congress



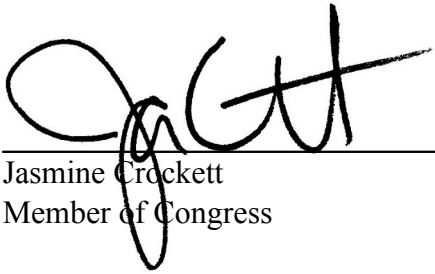
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



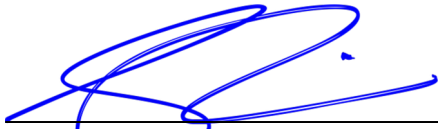
Ed Case
Member of Congress



Chris Pappas
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Salud Carbajal
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Sharice L. Davids
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Derek Kilmer
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Ruben Gallego
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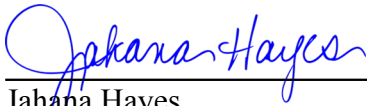
Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



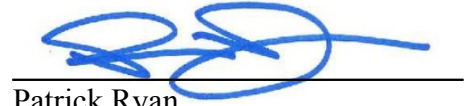
Daniel T. Kildee
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Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



Patrick Ryan
Member of Congress



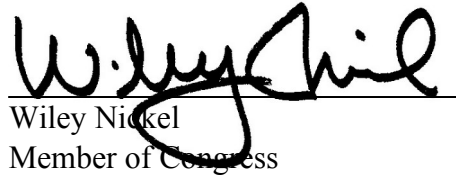
Josh Harder
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer
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Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Wiley Nickel
Member of Congress



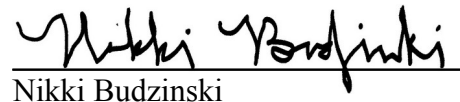
Colin Z. Allred
Member of Congress



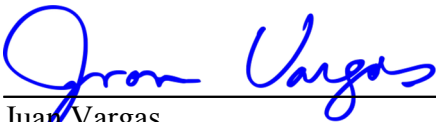
Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



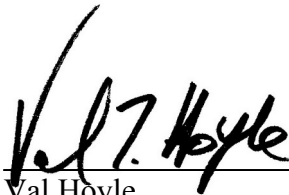
Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



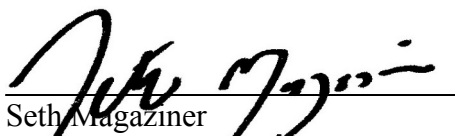
Ann McLane Kuster
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Val Hoyle
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Seth Magaziner
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Greg Landsman
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Darren Soto
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