

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

Re: *Advanced Methods to Target and Eliminate Unlawful Robocalls*, CG Docket No. 17-59.

During the final season of *Seinfeld*, Elaine gets a new phone number that used to belong to her recently deceased elderly neighbor. She soon begins receiving up to six calls a day from the neighbor's grandson, who's looking for his Gammy. Elaine quickly gets fed up and breaks the news to him: "Good-bye, Bobby. Don't call anymore. I'm dead now. Gotta go."¹ Unfortunately, many consumers share this frustration over getting repeated calls intended for someone else. This is especially true in the case of robocalls to reassigned numbers.

Today, when you change your phone number, you probably don't notify everyone who's called you in the past, including businesses to which you've given permission to call. So when your old number is reassigned, the new holder of that number may get calls intended for you. These misdirected calls are a nuisance to the consumers that receive them. And at the same time, legitimate businesses, through no fault of their own, waste their time and effort calling the wrong consumers while subjecting themselves to potential liability under the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA).

What can the FCC do to tackle this reassigned numbers problem? As the D.C. Circuit unanimously recognized last week,² we've been exploring ways to reduce unwanted robocalls to reassigned numbers. And today, we take another step toward developing a solution. Specifically, we propose to ensure that businesses have access to one or more databases that contain the comprehensive and timely information they need to avoid calling reassigned numbers. In addition, we seek public input on whether and how the FCC should extend safe-harbor protection under the TCPA to those businesses that choose to use such a database.

We also seek comment on three different ways for service providers to report phone number reassignments and for businesses to access that information. Should we require providers to report reassignment data to a single, FCC-designated database? Should we make them report the information to one or more of the data aggregators in the marketplace today? Or should we allow providers to report reassignment information to data aggregators voluntarily? With a robust record, we hope to adopt an approach that's easy-to-use and cost-effective for callers while minimizing the reporting burdens on service providers.

As usual, our initiatives to reduce unwanted robocalls are a team effort. Thank you to all of the staff that have worked so diligently on this item: John B. Adams, Micah Caldwell, Kurt Schroeder, Mark Stone, Patrick Webre, and Josh Zeldis from the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau; William Layton, Rick Mallen, Linda Oliver, and Bill Richardson from the Office of General Counsel; William Andrle, Heather Hendrickson, Marilyn Jones, Michelle Sclater, and Ann Stevens from the Wireline Competition Bureau; Kristi Thompson from the Enforcement Bureau; Robert Cannon and Wayne Leighton from the Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Analysis; and Belford Lawson from the Office of Communications Business Opportunities. With your efforts, we are moving one step closer to finding "Serenity Now"³ from unwanted calls.

¹ "The Maid," *Seinfeld*, Season 9, Episode, 19 (Apr. 30, 1998), available at <http://www.seinfeldscripts.com/TheMaid.htm>.

² *ACA Int'l v. FCC*, No. 15-1211, slip op. at 40 (D.C. Cir. Mar. 16, 2018).

³ "The Serenity Now," *Seinfeld*, Season 9, Episode 3 (Oct. 9, 1997), available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=auNAvO4NQnY>.