

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

Re: *Call Authentication Trust Anchor, WC Docket No. 17-97; Implementation of TRACED Act Section 6(a)—Knowledge of Customers by Entities with Access to Numbering Resources, WC Docket No. 20-67.*

The millions of illegal spoofed robocalls placed every day to Americans must be stopped. Consumers should be able to trust caller ID information so they can make an informed decision about whether they want to answer a call. This is especially critical in times like these, when we are in the throes of a COVID-19 pandemic where false or misleading information about cures, treatments, and recommendations for staying safe can mean the difference between life and death. It is unconscionable that scammers and opportunists¹ are using robocalls and text messages to prey on people's legitimate fears and apprehensions, especially the elderly population, known to be particularly vulnerable to robocall schemes.² But they are, and so today's action gets us another step closer to rooting out and stopping these individuals in their tracks.

I approve this item as a good start, but the record makes clear that we have much more to do. Today we implement a mandate in the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act for voice service providers to implement the STIR/SHAKEN caller ID framework, but only in the internet protocol, or IP portions of their networks. To be fully effective against this scourge, we need all voice service providers to implement call authentication and other measures to combat illegal spoofing in all networks as soon as possible. That means continuing to work with the industry to implement effective methods for tracing back illegal spoofed calls and text messages to their original sources, and following through on enforcement to the full extent of our statutory authority.

To that end, I am pleased that the Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeks comment on further implementation of the TRACED Act, and now includes additional questions to address concerns raised by commenters, including with regard to the limits of the STIR/SHAKEN framework as an option for use with non-IP-based networks, and barriers to STIR/SHAKEN implementation for enterprise calls, and for small and rural voice service providers. We cannot let up on this effort, because illegal robocallers clearly are not going to let up on their own.

My thanks to the Wireline Competition Bureau for their hard work on this important item.

¹ See, e.g., FCC, "COVID-19 Consumer Warnings and Safety Tips," <https://www.fcc.gov/covid-scams>; Department of Justice, "COVID-19 Fraud," <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edva/covid-19-fraud>.

² AARP's "Scams and Fraud" webpage includes multiple warnings and examples of coronavirus-related scams, including robocall campaigns. <https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/>.