

**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554**

In the Matter of)	
)	
Rules and Policies Regarding Calling Number Identification Service – Caller ID)	CC Docket No. 91-281
)	
Waiver of Federal Communications Commission Regulations at 47 C.F.R. § 64.1601(b) on Behalf of Jewish Community Centers)	
)	

COMMENTS OF CHEVRAH HATZALAH VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE CORPS INC.

Chevrah Hatzalah Volunteer Ambulance Corps Inc. (“Hatzalah”) hereby submits these comments in the above referenced proceeding in which the Commission proposes to amend its rules regarding Caller ID to enable called parties and/or law enforcement to obtain blocked Caller ID information in a wider variety of cases than are currently permitted.^{1/} Hatzalah applauds the Commission’s efforts to update its Caller ID rules and encourages it to act quickly to open Caller ID information to parties who need access to that information to serve public safety purposes. As the NPRM notes, the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau (“Bureau”) has already provided similar relief to Hatzalah and whatever action the Commission takes in this proceeding should not diminish the effect of that action.

Hatzalah is a nonprofit corporation that operates an ambulance service in New York City. Hatzalah, which was founded in New York City in 1965, has become a model for similar rescue and ambulance services throughout the world, and is the only volunteer ambulance service licensed to serve the entire City of New York. It is believed to be the largest volunteer ambulance service in the nation. The organization's first responders typically arrive on scene

^{1/} *In the Matter of Rules and Policies Regarding Calling Number Identification Service – Caller ID*, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, CC Docket No. 91-281 (rel. June 22, 2017) (“NPRM”).

within two to four minutes of receiving a call, significantly faster than the nine minute average response from 911 dispatched services. This largely accounts for Hatzalah's success and popularity, with its over 1,000 EMTs responding to over 75,000 medical emergency calls each year.

Hatzalah has developed its own state-of-the-art computer-aided dispatch system – HCAD (Hatzalah Computer Aided Dispatch) - which provides specially trained Hatzalah dispatchers with vital technical assistance, including instant caller identification and location for calls it receives from wireline customers. HCAD computers are able to access to the Automatic Location Identification ("ALI") database to match incoming wireline telephone numbers with its corresponding customer name and street address, along with any other available information. HCAD then uses a computerized digital map tracking system to locate the closest units and ambulance. This automatic data retrieval system eliminates the need for the human dispatcher to obtain contact information from the caller.

As the NPRM notes, the Bureau waived Section 64.1601(b) of the Commission's rules to allow Hatzalah access to blocked Calling Party Number ("CPN") information.^{2/} CPN blocking is a privacy protection put in place by the Commission in 1994 when it adopted its Caller ID rules.^{3/} While Public Service Answering Points ("PSAPs") are exempted from the CPN blocking rules, Hatzalah, as a private entity, was not otherwise covered by this exemption despite performing functions similar to a PSAP. Unblocking this information allows Hatzalah to return the call if the calling party is disconnected, and allows it to obtain caller location information using its HCAD system, since that information often cannot be obtained directly from callers in

^{2/} *NPRM* at FN. 18.

^{3/} *Id* at ¶ 5.

distress.^{4/} Since grant of this waiver in 2013,^{5/} Hatzalah has worked with Verizon, the local telephone provider in New York City, on implementing its waiver, and hopes to have the necessary systems in place soon.

The NPRM grew in part out of a dramatic increase over last few years in threatening calls, such as bomb threats made against Jewish Community Centers (JCCs).^{6/} Such calls not only cause disruption and trauma to the affected communities, they also drain valuable public resources in the required responses. Many of these calls are made with the CPN information blocked, which allows those making the threats to hide their identity from the victims and, even more dangerous, from law enforcement. To address the issue of threatening calls made with blocked CPN, the Commission has in the past granted rule waivers to allow law enforcement personnel to request the CPN information from the relevant carriers, recognizing that the public safety implications outweigh the privacy concerns.^{7/} The NPRM would eliminate the requirement that law enforcement or threatened parties first request a waiver from the FCC, instead amending the Caller ID rules to create an exception to 64.1601(b) which would allow law enforcement and threatened parties access to CPN in the case of threatening phone calls.^{8/} Hatzalah strongly supports the Commission's efforts to help combat the rise in threatening phone calls.

^{4/} See, *Petition for Waiver of Chevrah Hatzalah Volunteer Ambulance Corps, Inc.*, CC Docket No. 91-281, filed Sept. 30, 2011.

^{5/} Order, *In the Matter of Rules and Policies Regarding Calling Number Identification Service – Caller ID*, CC Docket No. 91-281 (rel. Feb, 20, 2013).

^{6/} NPRM at ¶ 9.

^{7/} *Id.* at ¶ 3. Earlier this year, the Commission granted a temporary waiver of the CPN rules to a series of JCCs. *Rules and Policies Regarding Calling Number Identification Service – Caller ID, Waiver of Federal Communications Commission Regulations at 47 CFR 64.1601(b) on Behalf of Jewish Community Centers*, CC Docket No. 91-281, Temporary Waiver Order (DA 17-223) (rel. Mar. 3, 2017) (the “Order”).

^{8/} NPRM at ¶ 10.

The NPRM also seeks comment on amending the rules to include procedures for others, like Hatzalah, which provide private emergency services, to secure access to CPN for blocked numbers.^{9/} Hatzalah supports this proposal as well. The Bureau’s rationale for granting relief to Hatzalah applies equally to many other private emergency services organizations. In its waiver grant, the Bureau found that Hatzalah’s mission was a “specific circumstance[] where the need to ensure public safety takes precedence over a caller’s interest in maintaining the privacy” of the call,^{10/} exactly the rationale under which it would change the rules in the NPRM. While there is a privacy interest in Caller ID information, disclosing that information does not violate any constitutionally-protected rights, leaving the Commission room to judge the weight of that right against the needs of the party seeking the information.^{11/}

While Hatzalah recognizes the importance of privacy rights, it agrees with the Commission that a better balance can be struck between protecting those rights and allowing public safety organizations, both public and private, to do their jobs protecting health and safety. It urges the Commission to act quickly to reform its Caller ID rules as it has proposed, including private emergency service providers as those able to access CPN information.^{12/}

Even if the Commission does not amend its regulations to permit additional private emergency service providers access to otherwise blocked CPN, the Commission should not disturb the relief it already provided to Hatzalah. As the Bureau found, Hatzalah serves “very

^{9/} *Id.* at ¶ 14.

^{10/} *Order* at ¶ 10; *NPRM* at ¶ 11.

^{11/} *Order* at ¶ 11; *NPRM* at FN 42.

^{12/} Hatzalah recognizes the potential burdens of the Commission authorizing every private emergency services provider to receive blocked CPN information. In its request for waiver, Hatzalah demonstrated that, as the largest all-volunteer ambulance service in the US, it serves “very unique and vital roles” in New York City, and its long-established presence in the city and its community precluded the use of an alternative 1-800 number. *Order* at ¶ 12. Accordingly, the Commission may wish to consider creating appropriate gating criteria for receiving blocked information.

unique and vital roles” in New York City and its community, and alternatives to its waiver are not satisfactory to fulfill its mission,^{13/} making its continued access to CPN information critically important to public safety. Accordingly, the Commission should, in any action it takes in in this proceeding, affirm the continued validity of its existing waiver to Hatzalah, for access to CPN information.

Respectfully submitted,

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^{13/} *Order at ¶ 12.*