

United States Senate

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6400
(202) 224-5364

June 17, 2015

The Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

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Dear Commissioners of the Federal Communications Commission:

We write to express our strong support for the portion of the proposed declaratory ruling announced by Chairman Wheeler on May 27, 2015, that would clarify that common carriers can offer robocall blocking technology without violating the Commission's call completion rules. We urge the full Commission to adopt this portion of the proposed declaratory ruling.

The Senate Special Committee on Aging has long been concerned about the cascade of robocalls that disrupt, annoy, and harass all Americans, but appear to disproportionately affect our seniors. The Federal Trade Commission currently receives approximately 150,000 robocall complaints *a month* (and these numbers are almost certainly substantially underreported). This is a situation that cannot continue. Whether these calls are an unwanted sales pitch or the beginning of a scam, they must be stopped.

The Committee held a hearing on June 10, 2015, titled *Ringling Off the Hook: Examining the Proliferation of Unwanted Calls*. During this hearing Professor Henning Schulzrinne, a former FCC Chief Technology Officer and current FCC consultant, explained how advances in technology have made it easy for unscrupulous actors to place a virtually limitless number of robocalls cheaply. Prof. Schulzrinne also explained how new technology makes it simple for robocallers to disguise or "spoof" a caller ID. As Prof. Schulzrinne explained, however, it is possible to fight technology with technology, and the technology exists *now* for carriers to offer robocall filters that have been proven to be effective in combatting robocalls.

As we understand it, the primary impediment to carriers deploying robocall filters *today* is a concern that these filters violate call completion requirements. We believe that concern is misplaced. Indeed, we have recently introduced the "Robocall and Call Spoofing Enforcement Improvements Act of 2015," (S. 1540) which expresses the Sense of Congress that telecommunications carriers have the legal authority to offer consumers services that block or filter robocalls. We are extremely pleased that Chairman Wheeler's proposal is consistent with our view of the law, and urge its adoption.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to protect Americans from the scourge of unwanted robocalls.



Susan M. Collins
Chairman

Sincerely,



Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 15, 2015

The Honorable Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member
Committee on Special Committee on Aging
United States Senate
G31 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator McCaskill:

Thank you for your letter expressing support for a proposal that would clarify that carriers can provide, at the consumer's request, existing robocall blocking technology without violating the Communications Act or the Commission's rules. Your views on this issue are very important. We have included your letter in the record of the related proceeding and considered your views as part of the Commission's review.

I agree that market-based robocall blocking solutions can and should be offered by carriers at the consumer's request so that consumers can take back control of their phones and stop unwanted calls. We know that consumers value their privacy, regardless of whether unwanted efforts to reach them target their home landlines or wireless phones. Let me assure you that the Commission is committed to the Telephone Consumer Protection Act's (TCPA) goal of protecting consumers from unwanted calls.

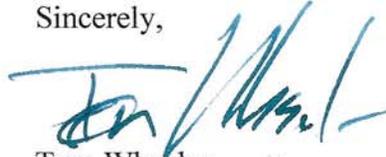
With respect to the specific issue you raise, for the first time the Commission clarified in its June 18, 2015, *Declaratory Ruling and Order*, that nothing in the Communications Act or the Commission's rules prohibits carriers or other service providers from implementing consumer-initiated call-blocking technologies and developing comprehensive solutions. As such, wireline and wireless carriers, as well as VoIP providers, are free to provide consumers with services and technologies to block unwanted robocalls. As you observed in the hearing before the Senate Special Committee on Aging, the technology exists for carriers to offer robocall filters and effectively combat robocalls, and the Commission's action allows for implementation of these market-based technologies at the consumer's request and encourages the continued advancement of industry-wide solutions.

The Commission's decisions on these issues were based on an extensive record in response to the petitions, including numerous informative meetings with trade associations, small business owners, state attorneys general, consumer groups, and other interested parties. Please be assured that we have carefully considered the input of all stakeholders, including callers and consumers alike.

Page 2—The Honorable Claire McCaskill

I appreciate your interest and support in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 15, 2015

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Chairwoman
Committee on Special Committee on Aging
United States Senate
G31 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

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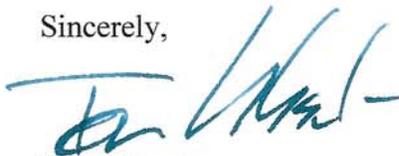
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Tom Wheeler