

# FCC Issues Proposed Order to Reduce Wrong Number Robocalls

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** November 21, 2018

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## *Proposal Would Establish Reassigned Number Database; Require Callers to Cross-Reference for Accuracy of Information*

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) [announced today](#) it will take decisive action to reduce the volume of wrong number robocalls. Consumers have been complaining for years about escalating debt collection, telemarketing, and other robocalls made to the wrong people because the calls were intended to reach previous owners of their phone number. The callers have claimed they should not be held responsible for calling the wrong numbers because there was no way for them to know the numbers were reassigned to new consumers. Today's announcement by FCC Chairman Ajit Pai outlines the Commission's plan to put a clear end to this problem, by establishing a "reassigned number database." The database will let callers check whether a number has been reassigned so that they would be able to avoid calling or texting consumers who have not provided consent to receive robocalls and text messages.

With Americans receiving [5 billion robocalls per month](#) and [consumer complaints](#) about unwanted robocalls soaring, a reassigned number database provides an essential tool in reducing the volume of unwanted calls placed to cell phones without the express consent of the recipient.

"We heartily commend the Federal Communications Commission for its creativity and leadership evidenced in this proposed order to establish a reassigned number database," **said Margot Saunders, senior counsel at the National Consumer Law Center.** "An effectively created and managed database will significantly reduce the number of unwanted calls to consumers and will reduce liability under the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) for callers. Callers that use the reassigned number database will also reach their intended recipients much more successfully."

The proposed order would establish a single, comprehensive, and mandatory database to which all telephone service providers are required to report information about disconnected and reassigned numbers. Callers will be required to check the database to confirm that cell phone numbers at which consumers have consented to receive robocalls and texts have not been reassigned to other consumers.

"Consumer Reports welcomes Chairman Pai's proposal to protect consumers with reassigned numbers from receiving unwanted robocalls. Consumers are overwhelmed with robocalls. Companies shouldn't have free rein to robocall consumers, just because a previous owner of their phone number agreed to receive calls," **said Maureen Mahoney, a policy analyst at Consumer Reports.** "This proposal recognizes that and would set up an effective and workable system to put a stop to this abuse. We urge the Commission to continue to work to ensure that all consumers have meaningful control over the calls they receive."

The reassigned number database, populated by the carriers and paid for by robocallers, will end the robocallers frequent excuse that they had no way to know they were calling numbers that had been reassigned. Reducing these unwanted calls to cell phones will provide relief for consumers and reduce caller liability—sparing callers potential fines and costly litigation for continually dialing a reassigned number without the consent of the recipient.

“In the battle against unwanted robocalls, the reassigned number database would be a crucial piece of armor to protect consumers by requiring that the callers check first to make sure the person they’re trying to reach still has the number that’s being dialed,” **said Susan Grant, Director of Consumer Protection and Privacy at Consumer Federation of America.**

The database will be administered by an independent third party chosen pursuant to a competitive bidding process and managed according to rules determined by the FCC.