Support Strong Legislation to Stop Abusive Robocalls

July 23, 2019

Dear Representative:

The undersigned organizations representing consumers throughout the United States strongly urge your support for H.R. 3375, the Stopping Bad Robocalls Act. This bipartisan legislation, which the Committee on Energy and Commerce approved by a unanimous vote of 48-0, will help secure important protections against abusive robocalling.

Robocalls are an ever-increasing plague. Last year, Americans received an estimated 47.8 billion robocalls. They harass us, disrupt our peace of mind, interrupt important time with family, and interfere with important communications. Many of these annoying automated calls are to sell products or to collect debts. They also enable scams to enter our homes. Truecaller found that consumers had lost an estimated $10.5 billion to phone scams in a single 12-month period. And spoofing, in which a caller sends a false number in the caller ID, compounds the problem, impeding call-blocking services and tricking consumers into picking up the phone.

A Consumer Reports national survey released earlier this year found that 70 percent of consumers don’t even answer the phone anymore if they don’t recognize the number, because their phones are so overrun with unwanted robocalls.

H.R. 3375 would strengthen our laws to curb this abusive robocalling.

- It would direct the FCC to issue clear regulations to better ensure that automated calls and texts cannot be made without the consumer’s prior consent, by requiring that the technologies that enable unwanted calls are properly defined and consumers can stop unwanted calls by withdrawing consent, and closing off avenues for callers to seek loopholes.

- It would direct the FCC to require phone companies to provide effective call authentication capability, at no charge to consumers, to better identify and stop robocalling and texting that uses deceptively “spoofed” phone numbers.

- It would strengthen FCC powers to impose forfeiture penalties for intentional violations;

- It would direct the FCC to oversee creation of a database that callers can check in order to avoid making robocalls and texts to a telephone number that has been reassigned to a different consumer who has not given consent, and would clarify that the caller must have consent from the person actually being called.

Consumers are calling on Congress to enact these reforms now.

We strongly urge your support for H.R. 3375.
Please feel free to contact Margot Saunders at National Consumers Law Center, msaunders@ncle.org, and Maureen Mahoney at Consumer Reports, mmahoney@consumer.org, with any questions.

Sincerely,

Allied Progress
Americans for Financial Reform
Center for Responsible Lending
Consumer Action
Consumer Federation of America
Consumer Reports
Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC)
Justice in Aging
National Association of Consumer Advocates
National Association of Consumer Bankruptcy Attorneys
National Consumer Law Center on behalf of its low-income clients
National Consumers League
National Fair Housing Alliance
National Legal Aid & Defender Association
National Rural Social Work Caucus
Public Citizen
Public Knowledge

Center for Digital Democracy, Alabama
The Alabama Appleseed Center for Law & Justice
Alaska Public Interest Research Group (AkPIRG)
Center for Economic Integrity, Arizona
Arkansans Against Abusive Payday Lending, Arkansas
Arkansas Community Institute, Arkansas
California Low-Income Consumer Coalition
Public Law Center, California
Media Alliance, California
California Alliance for Consumer Education,
Western Center on Law & Poverty, California
Privacy Rights Clearinghouse, California
Public Good Law Center, California
Consumers for Auto Reliability and Safety, California
Public Counsel, California
Justice & Diversity Center of the Bar Association of San Francisco/ Consumer Advocacy
Funeral Consumer Alliance of Connecticut, Inc.
Connecticut Legal Services, Inc.
Tzedek DC, District of Columbia
Legal Aid Service of Broward County, Florida
Florida Alliance for Consumer Protection, Florida
Florida Silver Haired Legislature Inc., Florida
Independent Party of Florida, Florida
Mid-Pinellas Coalition of Neighborhood Associations, Florida
Funeral Consumers Alliance of Sarasota – Manatee, Florida
Green Forest CDC, Georgia
Georgia Watch, Georgia
Woodstock Institute, Illinois
Digital Privacy Alliance, Illinois
Western Illinois Area Agency on Aging
CARPLS Legal Aid, Illinois
Kentucky Equal Justice Center
Maine Center for Economic Policy
Greater Boston Legal Services, on behalf of its low-income clients, Massachusetts
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
The Midas Collaborative, Massachusetts
Center for Civil Justice, Michigan
Mississippi Center for Justice, Mississippi
Montana Organizing Project, Montana
New Jersey Citizen Action
Legal Services of New Jersey
Empire Justice Center, New York
Public Utility Law Project of New York
Financial Protection Law Center, North Carolina
Oregon Legal Guides
Oregon Consumer League
SeniorLAW Center, Pennsylvania
The One Less Foundation, Pennsylvania
Philadelphia VIP, Pennsylvania
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center
Tennessee Citizen Action
Texas Appleseed
Friends for Life
Texas Legal Services Center
Community Justice Program, Texas
Texas Access to Justice Commission
Texas A&M University
Family Violence Prevention Services, Texas
AAA Fair Credit Foundation, Utah
Virginia Citizens Consumer Council
Statewide Poverty Action Network, Washington
Mountain State Justice, Inc., West Virginia
West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy
WV Citizen Action Group, West Virginia
National Association of Social Workers West Virginia Chapter