

National Consumer Law Center Attorney Margot Saunders Will Testify at U.S. House Hearing on Legislating to Stop the Onslaught of Annoying Robocalls

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U.S. on Track to Hit 60 Billion Robocalls in 2019

Full written testimony of National Consumer Law Center Senior Counsel Margot Saunders is available at: <http://bit.ly/2UIVXIM>

Washington - On Tuesday, April 30 at 10:00 am ET, the U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce subcommittee on Communications and Technology will convene a hearing on "Legislating to Stop the Onslaught of Annoying Robocalls" and H.R. 946: the Stopping Bad Robocalls Act, introduced by Rep. Frank Pallone (D-NJ) and co-sponsored by 37 other members of Congress. "Passage of the Stopping Bad Robocalls Act would create a powerful tool that will stop most unwanted robocalls in the United States, giving us once again control over our telephones and saving our telephone system," **said National Consumer Law Center Senior Counsel Margot Saunders**, who will testify at the hearing.

In her testimony, Saunders will discuss the surging problem of unwanted robocalls since the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA), which is overseen by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC), was enacted in 1991, and how this pending legislation would significantly dial back the scourge of robocalls.

H.R. 946 would provide new and substantial protections from robocallers by clarifying various terms in the TCPA and requiring the implementation of meaningful call authentication technology (so Caller ID is once again reliable). The bill would ensure that consumers are protected from unwanted robocalls and robotexts by clarifying the definition of autodialer to ensure robocallers cannot evade the law's requirement for consumers' consent for robocalls. The bill also amends the law to reinforce that the TCPA applies to text messages, and to make certain that consent provided for robocalls can always be revoked.

Saunders' testimony will include examples of dozens of well-known American businesses and debt collectors that are responsible for tens of millions of unwanted and illegal telemarketing and collection robocalls, including student loan servicer Navient, the mortgage servicer Ocwen, Citibank, and Sterling Jewelers.

Robocalls surged after a 2018 decision from the U.S. Court of Appeals in D.C. that set aside a 2015 FCC order on the question of how to interpret the TCPA's ban on autodialed calls to cell phones without the called party's consent. This decision raised the specter that the prohibition might be interpreted not to cover the autodialing systems that are currently used to deluge cell phones with unwanted calls.

Saunders will testify on behalf of the National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low-income

clients), Consumer Action, Consumer Federation of America, and the National Association of Consumer Advocates.

Read more of NCLC's extensive body of work on illegal robocalls:
<https://www.nclc.org/issues/robocalls-and-telemarketing.html>