

## FCC Acting Chair Announces Actions/agenda to Further Combat Illegal Robocalls

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The Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Acting Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel laid out [a series of concrete agency actions to further combat robocalls](#) as the last item on the Commission's March 17, 2021 Open Meeting.

In doing so she noted that "unwanted robocalls are not only a nuisance, but they also pose a serious risk to consumers who can inadvertently share sensitive, personal information in response to bad actors' malicious schemes. I'm proud to unveil *my first set of actions* to put a renewed focus on what the FCC can do to combat the issue that we receive the most complaints about." (emphasis supplied). More to come?

The anti-robocall initiatives announced by Acting Chairwoman Rosenworcel include:

First, the Commission approved a \$225 million forfeiture against Texas telemarketers for "illegally spoofing approximately 1 billion robocalls to sell short-term, limited duration health insurance plans. The robocalls falsely claimed to offer health insurance plans from well-known health insurance companies such as Aetna, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Cigna, and UnitedHealth Group." The FCC had proposed such a fine last year.

Second, the Acting Chairwoman announced that the agency had delivered "cease-and-desist letters to six voice providers that have consistently violated FCC guidelines on the use of autodialed and prerecorded voice message calls.... [D]ownstream voice service providers will be authorized to block all voice provider traffic if the warned providers do not take steps to effectively mitigate illegal traffic within 48 hours or if they fail to inform the FCC and the Traceback Consortium within 14 days of these letters the steps they've taken to implement effective measures to prevent customers from using your network to make illegal calls."

Third, the Acting Chairwoman announced launch of "a Robocall Response Team, [which is] a group of 51 FCC staff members across six bureaus and offices tasked with coordinating and implementing the agency's anti-robocall efforts. The Robocall Response Team will bring together Commission efforts to enforce the law against providers of illegal robocalls, develop new policies to authenticate calls and trace back illegal robocalls, and educate providers and other stakeholders about what they can do to help."

Finally, the Commission has sent letters to the Federal Trade Commission, Department of Justice and National Association of Attorneys General “seeking to renew partnerships to combat robocalls.” According to the announcement, “the letters highlight a renewed interest in coordination between the FCC and other federal and state entities could ultimately benefit consumers and expresses [the Acting Chairwoman’s] commitment to fight robocall scams by leveraging the knowledge, skills, and jurisdictional reach of cooperating organizations to share critical investigative information and collaborate on cases.”

TCPAWorld will of course continue to monitor the FCC’s initiatives as implemented.

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