

NEWS RELEASE

Luther Strange

Alabama Attorney General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 22, 2015

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AG STRANGE CALLS ON PHONE CARRIERS TO OFFER CALL-BLOCKING TECHNOLOGY TO CUSTOMERS

(MONTGOMERY)-- Attorney General Luther Strange today joined 44 other state Attorneys General calling on five major phone companies to offer call-blocking technology to their wireless and landline customers. In a joint letter to the chief executives of the carriers, the attorneys general said a new Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rule clarification allows telecommunication service providers to offer customers the ability to block unwanted calls, and verifies that federal law does not prohibit offering the services.

In the letter to AT&T, Sprint, Verizon, T-Mobile and CenturyLink, the Attorneys General stated, "Every year, our offices are flooded with consumer complaints pleading for a solution to stop intrusive robocalls. Your companies are now poised to offer your customers the help they need. We urge you to act without delay."

Attorney General Strange said phone carriers had previously claimed they could not offer such services. At a July 2013 hearing before a Senate subcommittee, representatives from the US Telecom Association and CTIA testified that "legal barriers prevent carriers from implementing advanced call-blocking technology to reduce the number of unwanted telemarketing calls." CTIA is The Wireless Association, formerly known as the Cellular Telephone Industries Association. On June 18, 2015, the FCC voted to pass a rule clarifying that phone companies are allowed to use call-blocking technologies to block unwanted calls and texts.

"Now that the FCC has made clear that phone companies may use call-blocking, we are calling on these companies to assist in our fight against unwanted, annoying and sometimes expensive phone calls and texts," said Attorney General Strange. "Customers have long been asking for a way to stop these calls, and it is time for the phone carriers to comply and offer this valuable service."

Attorney General Strange said call-blocking options already exist for Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone service (NoMoRobo.com) and Android cell phones (Call Control), and the phone carriers should move quickly to implement and inform their consumers of these options.

The Attorneys General whose offices signed today's letter are: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

A copy of the letter follows.

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Officer
T-Mobile USA
12920 SE 38th Street
Bellevue, WA 98006

Dear Mssrs. Stephenson, McAdam, Claire, Legere and Post:

As state Attorneys General, we are on the front lines of consumer protection for millions of Americans harassed by unwanted and unwelcome robocalls. Though our offices work diligently to prosecute those who violate state and federal laws intended to prevent such calls, our enforcement efforts alone cannot stop the problem. The better solution is to stop intrusive calls before they ever reach the consumer. To that end, we call on you to take full advantage of the opportunity provided by the rule clarification recently adopted by the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) and offer call-blocking technology to your consumers.

Previous discussions regarding the implementation of call-blocking technologies were cut short by concerns that such technology may violate federal law. At a July 2013 hearing before a Senate subcommittee, for example, representatives from the US Telecom Association and CTIA testified that “legal barriers prevent[] carriers from implementing advanced call-blocking technology to reduce the number of unwanted telemarketing calls.”

In response to that concern, thirty-nine Attorneys General sent a letter to the FCC last September asking the Commission to issue an official opinion clarifying that telephone providers are not prohibited by law from offering, at the customer’s request, technology to block unwanted calls or texts.

On June 18, 2015, the FCC responded, formally adopting a rule clarification, clearly stating that federal law does not prohibit telecommunication service providers from offering, upon a customer’s

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request, services intended to block unwanted calls. This clarification by the FCC should remove any doubt about your legal authority to empower consumers by providing call-blocking technology to help stop robocalls, scam text messages and unwanted telemarketing calls.

Since call-blocking options already exist for Voice over Internet Protocol or VoIP phone service (NoMoRobo.com) and Android cell phones (Call Control), landline and wireless carriers should move swiftly to implement and inform consumers of these options.

Every year, our offices are flooded with consumer complaints pleading for a solution to stop intrusive robocalls. Your organizations are now poised to offer your customers the help they need. We urge you to act without delay.

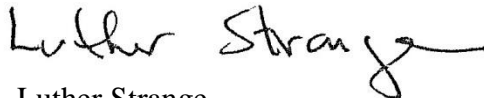
Respectfully,



Greg Zoeller
Indiana Attorney General



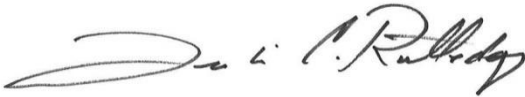
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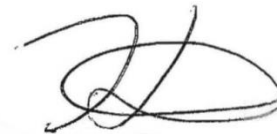
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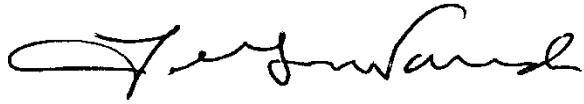
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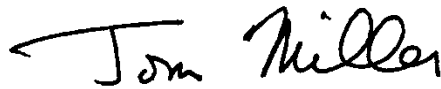
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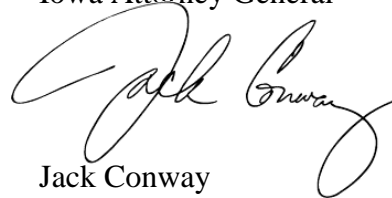
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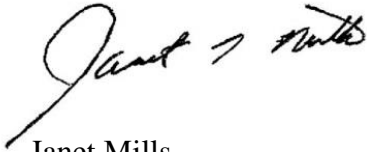
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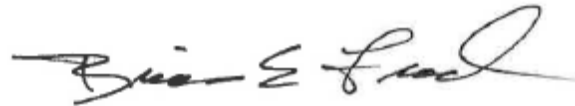
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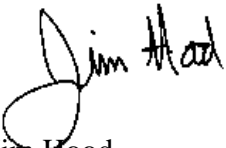
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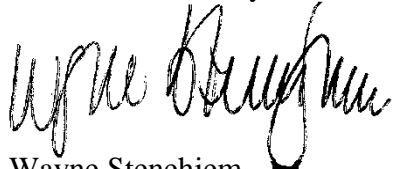
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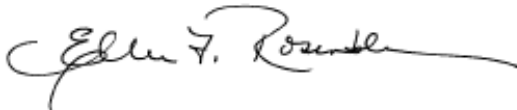
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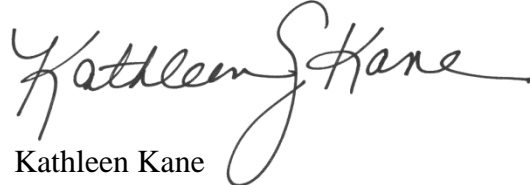
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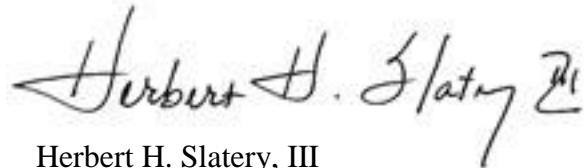
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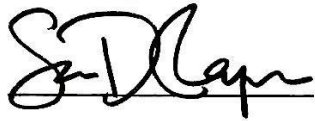
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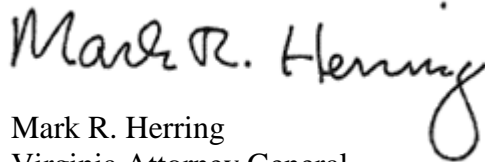
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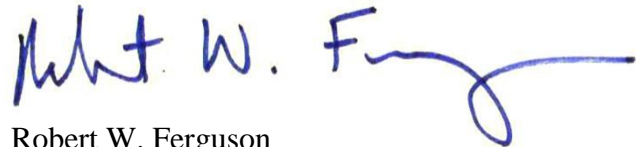
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