

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of**

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations Ranking Member Yvette Clarke

Hearing on “Stopping Illegal Robocalls and Robotexts: Progress, Challenges, and Next Steps”

June 4, 2025

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Americans are tired of the hundreds of unwanted calls and texts they receive every year from scammers attempting to steal their hard-earned money. In 2023, Americans lost over 25 billion dollars to phone-based scams. These criminals target the vulnerable and kind-hearted by pretending to be law enforcement, Medicare, or even relatives in order to scam them out of hard-earned money. Enough is enough.

For years there has been a bipartisan effort to address this issue. In 2019, Democrats and Republicans came together to pass the Pallone-Thune TRACED Act, giving the federal government greater enforcement ability and the authority to implement a call authentication framework and force phone carriers to improve the traceback of illegal calls. Under the Biden Administration, the Federal Communications Commission created the Robocall Response Team that has assisted in cutting off providers who facilitate illegal robocalls. And last year, Ranking Member Pallone led a Democratic package to close the loopholes scammers rely on to target Americans. Committee Democrats are now working on updates to strengthen that package.

Unfortunately, the Trump Administration and congressional Republicans are retreating from the fight against illegal robocalls and robotexts. Just last week President Trump released his 2026 budget proposal, in which he recommends cutting 42 million dollars and firing 83 people from the Federal Trade Commission. By the Trump Administration’s own definition, the mission of the FTC is “to protect the public from unfair or deceptive business practices,” including unlawful telemarketing and robocalls. How can we expect the federal government to do more to protect Americans when the Trump Administration is firing the very people whose job it is to enforce the law? Right now, law enforcement in all 50 states and the District of Columbia are combatting robocalls. A bipartisan group of 40 State Attorney Generals wrote to Congress to say that their state laws regulating artificial intelligence help prevent spam phone calls and texts. But just a few weeks ago, Republicans on this Committee voted for a reconciliation package that includes a 10-year moratorium on enforcement of state and local AI laws that those State Attorney Generals are opposed to. This provision stops states in their tracks from doing important work when we have not yet provided a federal solution. I think my Republican colleagues forget they are not the only elected officials in this country. State legislators and law enforcement work in tandem every day to stop these harassing robocalls and texts, and you should not stand in their way.

Stopping robocalls and texts will require dedicated employees at every level of government. Congressional Republicans should not hamstring the efforts of state and local law

June 4, 2025

Page 2

enforcement and President Trump should not slash and burn the budgets and staff of federal agencies, all of which are dedicated to serving the American people.

We in Congress have a duty to our constituents. Committee Democrats are here to prioritize the will of the people who put us in these chairs, not prove our loyalty to Donald Trump. If my Republican colleagues honestly want to stop illegal robocalls and robotexts, let's work together to support the federal employees and agencies doing that work instead of tearing them down.

I yield back.