

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.

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

June 4, 2025

Combating the surge of unwanted robocalls and robotexts has been a priority of mine for years. In 2019, I led the passage of the Pallone-Thune TRACED Act. This law has helped protect Americans from predatory and annoying robocalls and gave federal agencies better tools to fight back against fraudsters.

Despite these steps, Americans are still continuously bombarded by unwanted calls and texts that are not only annoying but cause real harm through fraud and scams. Technological advancements have supercharged fraud and made it easier and less expensive for scammers to make massive numbers of robocalls, to “spoof” caller ID information in order to hide a caller’s true identity. They also use artificial intelligence (AI) to trick consumers into thinking they are talking to a relative in financial trouble or to a trusted business offering assistance.

Americans received over 52 billion robocalls in 2024—which is nearly 200 calls for every American adult. Scams targeting seniors are especially rampant and take many forms including calls or texts claiming to be from grandchildren, or law enforcement, or Medicare – all aimed at bilking money from the senior citizen.

Robotexts are increasingly problematic, using automated text messages that trick recipients into clicking damaging links, providing personal or financial information, or paying for fraudulent items or services.

Congress has to continue to update the authorities we’ve given both the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission to crackdown on robocalls. We must also consider legislation focused on robotexts, and provide our consumer protection agencies with adequate funding and staffing to hold bad actors accountable.

The TRACED Act gave the FCC increased authority to require carriers to implement a call authentication framework, stepped up enforcement action against bad actors, and directed carriers to develop better tools to protect their customers.

As technology evolves, however, fraudsters are finding new ways to scam Americans and abuse loopholes. Last Congress, I led a Democratic effort that would expand anti-robocall protections and provide explicit protections against robotexts. Our legislation would have also closed loopholes exploited by scammers, combated the use of AI for scams, and alleviated the cost of robocall-blocking technology for consumers. My colleagues and I are working on

updates to strengthen that package and I am sure today's testimony will help inform our thinking on how to better protect consumers from unwanted robocalls and robotexts.

While I'm sure there is uniform agreement on this Committee that it is important to put an end to harassing and illegal robocalls and robotexts, actions by the Trump Administration threaten our efforts to do just that. Republicans are regularly undermining efforts to address these threats, cutting funding and staff from the very entities that protect consumers, all to give giant tax breaks to billionaires who don't need them.

While law enforcement and state governments have been active in combating robocalls and on working with industry to find technical solutions to address robocalls, last month House Republicans supported the GOP Tax Scam that included a 10-year moratorium on state and local enforcement of their own AI laws. If this giant giveaway to Big Tech becomes law, it could stop state attempts to develop innovative solutions to prevent illegal robocalls and texts. It compromises Americans' financial well-being and hamstring states who are working to keep their citizens safe.

Federal consumer protection agencies are vital components in the fight against robocalls and robotexts. But, since taking office, President Trump has attempted to illegally remove Senate-confirmed FTC Commissioners from their positions and has reduced FTC and FCC staff, crippling these two important agencies' efforts to protect consumers.

Democrats have advocated for stronger authority and resources for the FTC and FCC and for sensible guardrails to ensure consumers' safety is at the forefront of strong enforcement by federal, state, and private partners. But House Republicans have proposed budgets with devastating cuts to already under-resourced agencies. This is not the way to protect consumers.

And with that I yield back the balance of my time.