



**Testimony of
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CTIA
In Opposition to Connecticut House Bill 5712
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Before the Connecticut Joint Committee on Energy & Technology

Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and members of the committee, CTIA®, the trade association for the wireless communications industry, opposes Connecticut House Bill 5712, which would require telecommunications providers, including wireless providers, to block an unlimited amount of telephone calls and prohibit providers from charging for blocking such calls.

The wireless industry takes the issue of unsolicited telephone calls seriously. More recently, in keeping with the industry's continuing efforts on this issue, CTIA members participated in a Federal Communications Commission Robocalling Strike Force. The Strike Force released a report in October 2016 calling for the acceleration of the development of new tools and solutions to combat robocalls.¹ The report contains specific deliverables for the various industry sectors, including the wireless industry. We remain committed to working to successfully deliver on the report's commitments to help deter robocallers from illegally using carrier networks to send unsolicited phone calls.

It is important to note the wireless industry is already delivering call-blocking services today and is committed to improving our products. CTIA's carrier and mobile device manufacturer members have developed a variety of tools, many for free, and others for a minimal cost, that help consumers prevent unwanted communications, including call blocking.² Moreover, the requirement in the

¹ See, Robocall Strike Force Report, <https://transition.fcc.gov/cgb/Robocall-Strike-Force-Final-Report.pdf>, (Oct 26, 2016).

² See, e.g., *Block Calls and Messages*, <https://www.att.com/esupport/article.html#!/wireless/KM1009412>; *Block, Restrict or Allow Voice Calls Using My Sprint*, https://support.sprint.com/support/article/block_restrict_or_allow_voice_calls_using_my_sprint/cas-e-fk158645-20101105-114511; *Message Blocking*, <https://support.t-mobile.com/docs/DOC-1712>; <https://support.t-mobile.com/docs/DOC-23906>; <http://www.t-mobile.com/company/privacy-resources/blocking/call-msg-blocking.html>; *How to Block Calls and Messages*,



proposal that telecommunications providers offer call blocking services at no cost to consumers would likely run afoul of federal law in that states are prohibited from regulating the rates charged by any commercial mobile services provider or any private mobile service provider.³

In addition to these tools, consumers can choose call-blocking applications offered by third parties. There are currently dozens of such apps across major mobile operating systems. For example, NoMoRobo.com announced in the summer of 2016 the availability of a new application for Android and iOS users to block robocalls. Given the widespread popularity of Android and iOS operating systems on U.S. smartphones, NoMoRobo's announcement is yet another example of competitive innovation working to bring effective blocking technology to the American consumer. CTIA has also published step-by-step instructions and compiled a list of the many available applications that will work on the major handset operating systems, including Android, iOS, Windows and BlackBerry systems.⁴

In addition, CTIA and the wireless carriers actively educate consumers on the steps they can take to limit robocalls by utilizing their own features as well as the plethora of third party mobile apps available. CTIA monitors the various app stores and is constantly updating our website to include the most recent tools available for consumers to avoid unwanted calls.

Wireless carriers also monitor spikes in suspicious calls and partner with law enforcement to help prosecute bad actors. Wireless carriers remain committed to deterring bad actors from illegally using networks to send unwanted communications. Carriers constantly monitor their networks to detect suspicious activity so that they can stop unwanted calls from reaching consumers. Moreover, carriers work with law enforcement and regulatory agencies to shutdown these unlawful operations and prosecute those who misuse communications networks.

<http://www.verizonwireless.com/support/how-to-block-calls-video/>;
<http://www.verizonwireless.com/support/block-numbers/>.

³ See 47 U.S.C. § 332(c)(3)(A) ("... no State or local government shall have any authority to regulate the entry of or the rates charged by any commercial mobile service or any private mobile service.").

⁴ See, e.g., Step-by-Step Directions to Stop Unwanted Calls and Texts to Your Mobile Phone, <http://blog.ctia.org/2015/04/03/stop-robocalls/>, Blocking Robocalls, <http://www.ctia.org/your-wireless-life/consumer-tips/blocking-robocalls> (last visited Feb 2, 2017).



Furthermore, carriers continue their participation in standards setting bodies, including the Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions, the 3GPP, the Internet Engineering Task Force, the Communications Fraud Control Association and the Messaging, Malware and Mobile Anti-Abuse Working Group, to develop new initiatives to help detect, deter and stop unwanted communications from reaching consumers.

The wireless ecosystem will continue to innovate and provide consumers with the tools and functionalities they demand to stop unwanted communications. Wireless carriers stand committed to ensuring that those tools and functionalities are available to consumers. Additionally, we will continue to work with state officials, law enforcement agencies, and federal agencies to help investigate and prosecute those unlawful actors who violate do-not-call laws.

A multi-pronged, multi-faceted approach with continually evolving solutions is the right path. Giving consumers access to a multitude of solutions beyond a carrier only solution is essential as illegal robocallers are working around the clock to deceive consumers and carriers, and are constantly trying to find work arounds to the solutions available. Instead of a 'one-size-fits-all' approach that will neither deter nor stop robocallers, communications providers, including wireless providers, must have the flexibility to create and allow new technologies to empower consumers with options to stop unwanted communications. For these reasons, we respectfully request that you not move HB 5712.