

August 5, 2015

The Honorable Tom Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St. SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

Last month, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted a Declaratory Ruling and Order to protect consumers from unwanted telemarketing calls and texts. These disruptive communications are the number one consumer grievance to the FCC, totaling more than 215,000 complaints in 2014 alone. Consumers have made it clear they do not want these calls and texts to invade their privacy and disrupt their lives.

The FCC correctly responded to these complaints and simplified the ways in which consumers can stop unwanted robocalls and robotexts. The FCC also gave phone companies the ability to offer customers “Do Not Disturb” technology that will allow consumers to block autodialed calls and texts. We strongly support these measures that will help Americans protect their privacy and minimize annoying telemarketing calls and texts.

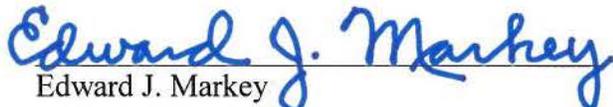
Now that the FCC has adopted the Declaratory Ruling and Order, more work remains to ensure that the Commission’s new rules are as effective as possible. First, the FCC should work with carriers and industry associations to help facilitate the development of effective “Do Not Disturb” technologies that can block robocalls and robotexts to consumers’ wireless and wireline phones. This technology should be developed and deployed as quickly as possible and it should be offered to all consumers at no additional cost. The right to privacy should not be considered a luxury feature. It is also critical that “Do Not Disturb” technology does not inadvertently block public safety notifications or calls and texts that consumers wish to receive.

Second, the FCC and phone companies should make consumers aware of “Do Not Disturb” technology and their right to opt out of telemarketing communications. The FCC and carriers should disseminate resources widely that explain how consumers can prevent unwanted robocalls and robotexts on both wireless and landline phones. This information should be presented in a simple, transparent and easily accessible manner through a public awareness raising campaign.

We respectfully request that you provide answers to the following questions: How does the FCC plan to work with phone companies to develop and institute the adoption of “Do Not Disturb” technologies? How will the FCC work with phone companies to inform and educate consumers about the new tools (both “Do Not Disturb” technology and simplified ways to stop telemarketing calls) that the FCC recently approved?

We thank the FCC for its attention to this important issue for American consumers, and we look forward to working with the Commission to strengthen consumers' ability to protect their privacy and block unwanted calls and texts. Please respond to this letter by August 25, 2015.

Sincerely,


Edward J. Markey
United States Senator


Ron Wyden
United States Senator


Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator


Jeff Merkley
United States Senator


Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator


Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator


Al Franken
United States Senator


Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator