

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
INTELLIGENCE
JOINT ECONOMIC

June 7, 2019

Hans Verstberg
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Verizon Communications
1095 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10036

Dear Mr. Verstberg:

As you know, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) recently voted to affirm that voice service providers may, by default, block unwanted calls. I am writing you today to urge you to implement this order quickly and promptly deploy call authentication technology to block robocalls. Moreover, I want to strongly urge you to offer this consumer protection technology free of charge to American consumers.

I know you share my belief that we have a responsibility to ensure that consumers are not unduly targeted or scammed by violators of telemarketing laws. It is estimated that consumers receive approximately 5 billion robocalls a month. Many of these unwanted calls are illegal scams that prey on the most vulnerable. In a recent letter to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, the National Association of Attorneys General expressed concern about reported losses in excess of \$290 million in 2017 as a result of frauds perpetrated by telemarketers. The Attorneys General also cited a report that telemarketing scams have been a \$9.5 billion cost to the U.S. economy. These costs are expected to rise and it is clear that we must act quickly to deploy technology to block unwanted calls and ensure those who disregard telemarketing laws are held accountable.

Most recently, the Senate approved the bipartisan Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act to hold intentional violators of telemarketing laws accountable to law enforcement. We must build on this momentum to crack down on illegal robocall scams and ensure consumers have all the tools necessary to protect themselves from unwanted calls.

Given the significant public interest in this matter, I respectfully request that you promptly install blocking technology at no charge and I look forward to working together to ensure consumers are protected from fraudulent calls and illegal scams.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Heinrich', with a stylized flourish at the end.

MARTIN HEINRICH
United States Senator