

Chairman Brett Guthrie Opening Statement
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
Stopping Illegal Robocalls and Robotexts: Progress, Challenges, and
Next Steps
Wednesday, June 4, 2025 – 10:15 AM ET

Chairman Palmer, thank you for holding this important hearing. Illegal and scam robocalls are a constant source of annoyance and harm to millions of Americans. According to recent analysis, last year Americans received over 52 billion robocalls—that’s over 4 billion calls each month and an average of 13 calls per person.

At the outset, I’d like to state that many robocalls are both legal and necessary. Robocalls are used to convey public service announcements and emergency messages. They are used for announcing school closures and providing reminders of upcoming appointments and payments. These are calls we want. But a large number of robocalls are illegal and are used to defraud, harass, and deceive consumers.

We’ve all received calls where someone on the other end of the line pretends to be from the IRS or the Treasury, attempts to offer student loans or other debt relief, sell health insurance, or claims to be from a bank or credit card company trying to alert you to “fraud” or “unauthorized activity” on your account. According to one survey, American victims of fraud lost an average of \$450 to phone scams that prey on trust and exploit vulnerabilities. This exploitation is despicable and the impact on victims is tragic. Many have lost their entire life savings. This must stop.

Thankfully, in 2019, this Committee passed bipartisan, bicameral legislation, which President Trump signed into law—the Pallone-Thune TRACED Act—to combat the epidemic of illegal robocalls, which I was proud to support.

The TRACED Act is an important law that provides the FCC and its partners with greater enforcement authority to hold illegal robocallers and bad actors accountable. Since the enactment of the TRACED Act, the FCC has used its authority to issue additional rules, as well as civil and criminal penalties under the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA). As a result, we're seeing a general downward trend in the prevalence of illegal robocalls.

In addition, the FCC continues to mandate that voice service providers implement STIR/SHAKEN caller ID authentication technology and provide robocall mitigation plans through the Robocall Mitigation Database. Furthermore, in 2020, USTelecom's Industry Traceback Group, or ITG, was recognized as the single private consortium to trace back the origins of suspected illegal robocalls, helping us stop these calls at their source. Altogether, we have seen some great work done by our federal agencies and their industry partners.

Despite these strides forward, however, illegal and scam robocalls persist. We are even seeing a significant increase in unwanted and scam robotexts, which include messages alerting consumers to act on "undeliverable packages" and "unpaid tolls," to name a few examples.

Complicating these issues are new developments in artificial intelligence (AI), including voice cloning and deep fake technologies, to impersonate individuals and generate scam phone calls and texts. Just last month, the FBI issued a warning about a malicious messaging campaign targeting government officials and their acquaintances by sending AI-generated voice messages impersonating senior U.S. officials to gain access to their data.

As challenges evolve, so too must the solutions. The Committee on Energy and Commerce has been at the forefront of leading discussions, understanding challenges, and developing solutions to address issues with new technologies, and we will continue to do so throughout the Congress.

Notwithstanding the complex landscape illegal and scam robocalls and robotexts pose for consumers, legitimate businesses, federal agencies, and their partners, I am optimistic that Republicans and Democrats will continue to work together to develop common sense, bipartisan solutions to protect the American people from these fraudsters.

I want to thank the witnesses for being here today and I look forward to hearing your testimonies. I yield back.

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