

Joshua M. Bercu Executive Director, Industry Traceback Group

Senior Vice President, Policy, USTelecom — The Broadband Association

Questions for the Record Responses

Stopping Illegal Robocalls and Robotexts: Progress, Challenges, and Next Steps.

July 7, 2025

The Honorable Russ Fulcher

1. As of April 2025, more than 221 million phone numbers are currently registered on FTC's Do Not Call registry.

a. What types of calls does the Registry block? What calls are allowed? Why does the Registry not block spam calls?

The Do Not Call Registry was established two decades ago to allow Americans to opt out of unsolicited telemarketing calls. Telemarketers must check the Registry before making unsolicited telemarketing calls, but unscrupulous illegal telemarketers and criminal scammers ignore the Registry entirely to blast their unsolicited and illegal calls to consumers.

In terms of blocking, voice service providers have implemented various types of blocking, including network-based blocking of invalid, unallocated, and unassigned numbers, analytics-based blocking based on traffic patterns, and blocking based on Do Not Originate (DNO) Lists, including the DNO Registry maintained by the Industry Traceback Group (ITG). The DNO Registry includes numbers intended only for inbound calls to the Social Security Administration, Internal Revenue Service, courts and public safety offices, banks, retailers, and other trusted entities. DNO is a blunt, but very effective tool. Calls made from numbers on a DNO list will be blocked, as those numbers should never make outbound calls.

b. Is extending the Do Not Call registry to block spam calls feasible?

The Do Not Call Registry has been highly effective in stopping unsolicited spam calls from actors that follow the law, such as legitimate telemarketers. However, criminals engaged in fraud and unscrupulous telemarketers that ignore the laws are not, and will not be, deterred by the Do Not Call registry or implementing rules.

2. How effective has the Registry been in reducing illegal robocalls?

a. What issues or challenges are we seeing with the use of the Do Not Call registry?

The Do Not Call Registry has been highly effective in reducing unsolicited telemarketing calls. But it is not the right tool in addressing illegal robocalls from actors that ignore the law. For those actors, traceback, analytics-based and DNO blocking, and call authentication can help. While there is more work to do, these efforts have led to substantial declines in scam robocalls as well as unwanted call complaints to the FCC and FTC. Criminal enforcement also is critical to deter the actors that violate our laws with impunity to defraud Americans.

3. **How do we address flagrant violators of the Do Not Call registry, particularly those who are based overseas, and outside the jurisdiction of U.S. laws and enforcement authorities?**

Criminal enforcement and coordination with partners abroad is critical to deter the actors that ignore the Do Not Call Registry and other applicable laws in their efforts to defraud Americans.

The Honorable Lizzie Fletcher

1. **Mr. Bercu, there are more than 140 languages spoken throughout Harris and Fort Bend counties. In the Gulfton neighborhood in my district, people speak more than 50 languages.**

When we discuss the potential victims of abusive and dangerous robocalls and robotexts, those in our communities who speak English as their second or third language or are learning English now, are particularly vulnerable to these scams. Whether these individuals who are being scammed out of their money or their sensitive personal data, they are at a disadvantage when trying to discern what is real and what is a scam.

What steps can enforcement agencies and Congress take to protect these communities from fraudulent robocalls and robotexts, particularly those that seek to exploit these language barriers to target vulnerable populations?

Criminals that exploit language barriers to target vulnerable populations are an ongoing challenge. The tools deployed by voice service providers, including analytics-based blocking and call authentication, can help reduce but not eliminate these scams. Traceback also can help. The ITG, working closely with law enforcement and other industry partners, has successfully traced calls targeting non-English speakers and we stand ready to continue to do so. Ultimately, to best fully stop these criminals, the government must prioritize criminal enforcement, including against transnational actors.