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For Immediate Release**FCC ADOPTS RULES TO ALLOW PHONE COMPANIES TO PROACTIVELY BLOCK ILLEGAL ROBOCALLS*****New Rules Authorize Call Blocking of Certain Types of Numbers That Do Not or Cannot Make Outgoing Calls***

WASHINGTON, November 16, 2017—The Federal Communications Commission today approved new rules to protect consumers from unwanted robocalls, allowing phone companies to proactively block calls that are likely to be fraudulent because they come from certain types of phone numbers.

Unwanted calls, including illegal robocalls, are the top consumer complaint at the FCC, with more than 200,000 received annually. Some private analyses estimate that U.S. consumers received approximately 2.4 billion robocalls per month in 2016. Advancements in technology make it cheap and easy to make robocalls and to “spoof” Caller ID information to hide the caller’s true identity.

For example, perpetrators have used IRS phone numbers that don’t dial out to impersonate the tax agency, informing the people who answer that they are calling to collect money owed to the U.S. government. Such calls appear to be legitimate to those who receive them and can result in fraud or identity theft.

To combat these scams, the new rules approved today expressly authorize voice service providers to block robocalls that appear to be from telephone numbers that do not or cannot make outgoing calls, without running afoul of the FCC’s call completion rules.

As a result of today’s action, voice service providers will be allowed to block calls purporting to be from a phone number placed on a “do not originate” list by the number’s subscriber. They will also be allowed to block calls purporting to be from invalid numbers, like those with area codes that don’t exist, from numbers that have not been assigned to a provider, and from numbers allocated to a provider but not currently in use.

To minimize blocking of lawful calls, today’s Report and Order encourages voice service providers that elect to block calls to establish a simple way to identify and fix blocking errors. The rules also prohibit providers from blocking 911 emergency calls.

Action by the Commission November 16, 2017 by a Report and Order, and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 17-151). Chairman Pai, Commissioners Clyburn, O’Rielly, and Carr approving. Commissioner Rosenworcel approving in part and dissenting in part. Chairman Pai, Commissioners Clyburn, O’Rielly, Carr, and Rosenworcel issuing separate statements.

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).