



April 2, 2019

The Honorable Roger Wicker  
Chairman  
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
511 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Wicker and Ranking Member Cantwell:

Thank you for holding a markup of the *Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act*, S. 151. USTelecom supports this bipartisan legislation that will strengthen industry efforts to solve this vexing problem while focusing government's attention on the prosecution of bad actors.

Robocalls have become the number one consumer complaint at both the Federal Communications Commission and the Federal Trade Commission. We could not agree more with Senators Thune and Markey and other members of the committee that protecting American consumers by targeting criminal robocallers is a top national priority.

The *TRACED Act* rightly emphasizes the importance of reintroducing trust to the caller ID framework, while strengthening the ability of industry traceback efforts, including those led by USTelecom's Industry Traceback Group.

For the last several years, USTelecom's Industry Traceback Group has been hard at work exposing illegal robocallers that scam and spoof consumers. The group includes more than 25 voice providers from across the wireline, wireless, VoIP, and cable industries working to identify and trace suspicious traffic on networks. Participation is one of the most effective ways for carriers to enhance the critical enforcement efforts of the FCC, FTC, and other law enforcement agencies.

According to the FCC, “Over the course of the two years that the USTelecom Industry Traceback Group has been in operation, the amount of time necessary to conduct a traceback investigation from start to finish has shrunk from months to weeks.” The agency added, “The partnership that the FCC and USTelecom have created in this space is exactly the kind of industry/government cooperation necessary for success.”

Industry innovators also are leading the way with the deployment of new call authentication standards like SHAKEN/STIR which will arm consumers with more information about calls they receive and accelerate existing industry traceback efforts. Companies are also empowering consumers with new call blocking tools to mitigate illegal robocalls. USTelecom members started the process of deploying the SHAKEN/STIR standard in 2018, and further deployment is expected through 2019. The number of robocall blocking apps available to consumers has grown from 85 in 2016, to 550 in 2018 – a 495 percent increase.

USTelecom supports S. 151 because it will bolster our shared goal of bringing illegal robocallers to justice and help reduce the scourge of robocalls. In particular, we appreciate the bill’s recognition of the need for enhanced government prosecution, including criminal prosecution, of entities and individuals that are actively engaged in efforts to defraud American consumers. We appreciate your timely leadership and USTelecom’s members look forward to continuing our work together in shaping our national response to illegal robocalls.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Spalter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right from the end of the name.

Jonathan Spalter  
President and CEO  
USTelecom – The Broadband Association

Cc: The Honorable John Thune  
The Honorable Brian Schatz  
The Honorable Ed Markey