

Federation Resolution
on
Unwanted and Criminal Robocalls

Approved by the Federation Membership

Mm dd, 2019

Support for Additional Measures to Stop Unwanted and Criminal Robocalls

Background

Unwanted Robocalls are a nuisance as well as a source of criminal efforts to scam vulnerable older adults.

In 2019, House Energy and Commerce Chairman Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) introduced the Stopping Bad Robocalls Act (HR 946) to stop abusive robocall practices.

<https://bit.ly/2Sx11yK>

In 2019, Sens. John Thune (R-S.D) and Ed Markey (D-Mass.), members of the Commerce Committee, introduced the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act (S. 151). The bill would require service providers to adopt technology to authenticate phone calls before they reach consumers' phones and charges the FCC with implementing more rules around consumer protection. <https://bit.ly/2EmPTQe>

Several telecommunication and technology companies offer customers various approaches to blocking robocalls, but the options may not apply to all types of robocalls and phone types, may cost money, or may have limited effectiveness.

WHEREAS: Financial scams are a common problem, affecting approximately 1 of every 18 cognitively intact, community-dwelling older adults each year in the U.S.. Many of these crimes are perpetrated through robocalls. In 2018, Virginia had the 7th highest complaint rate to the National Do Not Call Registry;

WHEREAS: Fairfax County has implemented an education effort to help reduce scams targeting older adults called Silver Shield;

WHEREAS: The Fairfax County Police Department is seeking to expand their efforts to catch and prosecute local perpetrators of elder scams, but have little recourse against most phone related scams;

WHEREAS: The Commonwealth of Virginia has a law prohibiting robocalls but does not enforce the law because many of the criminals reside outside the state;

WHEREAS: The National Do Not Call Registry has not been effective in protecting consumers from law-breakers and overseas scammers;

WHEREAS: Several technological solutions that block robocalls could be implemented by telecommunications companies;

WHEREAS: Many older adults are unaware of the various methods and technologies they can employ to block some robocalls and how to implement them because of the numerous and

complicated options that may be available, depending on what type of phone and service provider they use;

WHEREAS: Telecommunications companies are charging consumers for services (such as caller ID) that could help customers avoid scams and block some robocalls

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fairfax Federation of Citizens Associations requests that the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors:

1. Continue to support Fairfax Police Silver Shield anti scam efforts against vulnerable older adults.
2. Supplement the Silver Shield campaign (possibly using trained citizens in the Police Volunteer in Police Service) to initiate efforts to proactively assist vulnerable older adults to implement available robocall blocking technology and caller ID services on their mobile and land lines.
3. Urge our State legislators to require telecommunication companies operating in Virginia to implement call blocking technologies at no cost to consumers if Federal Laws do not preempt state laws on this issue.
4. Provide greater assistance to consumers, especially vulnerable older adults, to help them compare and implement the various free and not-free robocall blocking and ID services that their telecommunications companies offer.

Approved by the Fairfax Federation _____ Date _____