



**Testimony of
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On Wireless Industry Efforts to Combat Robocalls

Before the Pennsylvania Senate Democratic Policy Committee

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Chair Boscola, Senator Dinniman, and members of the committee, on behalf of CTIA, the trade association for the wireless communications industry, I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue. CTIA members are committed to protecting consumers from unlawful robocalls. The wireless industry works to minimize the negative impact of robocalls, collectively stopping millions of calls every day. Some automated calls, including pharmacy reminders, travel updates, or school notices, can be useful, but too many robocalls today are illegal and intrusive.

Carriers and others in the communications ecosystem are aggressively addressing illegal robocalling, caller ID spoofing, and other issues, creating call authentication regimes that will help the entire industry work to combat bad actors. For example, the wireless industry is working with standards bodies, including the Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions or ATIS, to implement caller ID authentication, which is often labeled with its standards name: SHAKEN/STIR (Signature-based Handling of Asserted Information Using toKENs and the Secure Telephone Identity Revisited). This is a new system aimed at combating illegal caller ID "spoofing." Such a system is critical to protecting consumers from "spoofed" robocalls, which scam artists often use to trick consumers into answering their phones.



So what is SHAKEN/STIR? It is the framework that can be implemented to help prevent the completion of “spoofed” calls. It uses digital certificates to ensure the calling number of a telephone call has not been tampered with. Each wireless provider would obtain its digital certificate from a certificate authority that is trusted by other service providers. The certificate technology enables the called party to verify the calling number is accurate and not “spoofed.” The idea behind SHAKEN/STIR is to allow consumers to once again trust their Caller ID by having service providers sign their subscribers’ telephone numbers with this kind of digital signature. The four national wireless carriers are on track to implement SHAKEN/STIR in 2019.

The wireless Industry also continues to work on a Display Framework to determine how to show a verified call. The ATIS-Governance Authority has solicited proposals for the Policy Administrator for SHAKEN/STIR, and plans are to implement the Policy Administrator later this year, which would provide an anchor for the work of Certificate Authorities.

SHAKEN/STIR will make a big difference in verifying calls to identify bad calls, but it won’t end all robocalls. Accordingly, the wireless industry continues educating consumers on ways to curb unwanted robocalls with blocking features and tools that can identify likely “spam.” For example, CTIA and its member companies encourage consumers to use blocking features built into devices, install robocall blocking apps, report “spam” messages to wireless providers by forwarding unwanted texts to 7726 (SPAM), report unwanted calls to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) through their online portals or call the FTC at 1-877-



FTC-HELP or the FCC at 1-888-CALL-FCC, and visit CTIA.org or the FCC webpage for additional resources to combat robocalls.

In closing, the wireless industry recognizes the need to combat unwanted and illegal robocalls. That is why we are working collaboratively with interested stakeholders to deploy SHAKEN/STIR and continuing our efforts to educate consumers about the tools and resources to block unwanted calls and texts, including robocalls. A multi-pronged, multi-faceted approach is essential as illegal robocallers are working around the clock to deceive consumers and carriers. We stand ready to continue our important work in this area. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.