CTIA, NCTA, Others Back Blocking of Illegal Robocalls; Sirius XM Urges Fix of 'False Positives'

Telecom parties sought more FCC leeway to block illegal robocalls while others decried legal "false positive" calls being blocked. Carriers need "flexibility to combat [illegal] calls in multi-faceted and creative ways," CTIA **replied**, posted in docket 17-59 Wednesday (see **1810090039**). It said carriers "combatting illegal robocalls in good faith must have protection from associated legal and regulatory liability; and the ecosystem should not be stifled by rules aimed at addressing false positives," an issue "unlikely to be caused by carrier-initiated blocking." Identify "targeted situations where the consumer benefits of permitting blocking will outweigh any risk of interference with lawful calls," **advised** NCTA. It urged permitting but not mandating "blocking pursuant to objective criteria developed by providers or industry standard-setting bodies, including the SHAKEN/STIR [Secure Handling of Asserted information using toKENs/Secure Telephone Identify Revisited] protocol" for call authentication. Voice providers should be empowered to offer access to blocking services "on an opt-out basis to a greater extent than they do today by affirming the permissibility," **said** the American Cable Association. It noted consumer group support for opt-out that cited few consumers as opting in to blocking. T-Mobile vendor First Orion **sought** a "balanced" approach to develop "innovative call protection solutions" without regulating call labeling. SiriusXM **opposed** expanding call-blocking authority, "at least until effective solutions to the problem of false positives have been fully implemented." It said many initial commenters (see **1809250031**) minimized "overblocking" problems, as FCC efforts to target spoofed and other illegal calls "inadvertently led to widespread blocking and mislabeling of legitimate calls." It called for adopting "pragmatic recommendations like white lists, intercept messages, Caller ID requirements, and mandatory time frames" for voice providers to respond to complaints and halt blocking of legal calls. Neustar **backed** the FCC's existing criteria -- "invalid, unallocated, unassigned, and do-not-originate telephone numbers" -- for industry blocking of suspect robocalls. "In other cases, however, although some calls may have characteristics that make them appear to be illegal robocalls, there is high risk that legitimate traffic may be blocked as well. ... It is better to use the Caller ID system to provide information to consumers."

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