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For Immediate Release**FCC CHAIRMAN PROPOSES CALL BLOCKING BY DEFAULT TO
HELP COMBAT THE SCOURGE OF ROBOCALLS*****Expects Providers to Offer Consumers Robust, Free Call Blocking Tools
Based on Analytics & Consumer Contact Lists***

WASHINGTON, May 15, 2019—Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai is proposing bold action to help consumers block unwanted robocalls. He has circulated a declaratory ruling that, if adopted, would allow phone companies to block unwanted calls to their customers by default. In addition, companies could allow consumers to block calls not on their own contact list. The accompanying draft Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking would propose a safe harbor for providers that implement network-wide blocking of calls that fail caller authentication under the SHAKEN/STIR framework once it is implemented.

“Allowing call blocking by default could be a big benefit for consumers who are sick and tired of robocalls. By making it clear that such call blocking is allowed, the FCC will give voice service providers the legal certainty they need to block unwanted calls from the outset so that consumers never have to get them,” said Chairman Pai. “And, if this decision is adopted, I strongly encourage carriers to begin providing these services by default—for free—to their current and future customers. I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this latest attack on unwanted robocalls and spoofing.”

Today, many voice providers have held off developing and deploying call blocking tools by default because of uncertainty about whether these tools are legal under the FCC’s rules. Allowing default call blocking by voice providers could significantly increase development and consumer adoption of such tools. This blocking could be based on analytics and consumer “white lists.” Similar analytics are currently used by third-party developers in call blocking apps. Consumer white lists could be based on the customer’s own contact list, updated automatically as consumers add and remove contacts from their smartphones.

Chairman Pai also proposes seeking public comment on how [caller ID authentication](#) standards, known as SHAKEN/STIR, can inform call blocking. The Chairman has demanded that carriers adopt these standards to combat malicious spoofing. This system of signing calls as legitimate as they pass through the phone networks may well be useful for call blocking tools. With the expectation that such standards will be available later this year, the Chairman is proposing in a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to create a safe harbor for calls that are blocked because they are not authenticated under the SHAKEN/STIR framework.

Today’s action would be the first by the Commission to directly combat scam robocalls that spoof legitimate, in-service numbers. This follows adoption of [new rules](#) in 2017 which allowed blocking of calls before they reach consumers when they are highly likely to be

illegitimate. These calls might appear to come from non-existent area codes or from numbers on the Do Not Originate list that do not make outbound calls—like the FCC’s own consumer help line, which was added to the list following scam calls that spoofed the agency’s 888-CALL-FCC number.

These measures will be considered by the full Commission at its June 6 Open Commission Meeting. If adopted, this ruling and any new rules would maintain strong protections against blocking of emergency calls. In addition, consumers would be allowed to opt-out of any blocking services they do not want.

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