

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

Re: *Adrian Abramovich, Marketing Strategy Leaders, Inc. and Marketing Leaders, Inc.*, EB-TCD-15-000020488.

After the FCC proposed fining Adrian Abramovich \$120 million last year for allegedly engaging in a massive spoofed robocall scheme, we gave him the chance to contest the allegations. Mr. Abramovich did in fact respond to our Notice of Apparent Liability. That response is more notable for what it doesn't say than what it does.

Specifically, Mr. Abramovich doesn't dispute that he was responsible for placing 96,758,223 robocalls during a three-month period in 2016.

He doesn't dispute that all these robocalls were made without the recipient's consent.

And he doesn't dispute that all these robocalls were accompanied by inaccurate caller ID information, making it appear as though they were coming from the same community as the party being called, a practice known as "neighbor spoofing."

What Mr. Abramovich *does* have to say in his defense isn't very convincing. For example, he asserts that he had "no intent . . . to defraud, cause harm or wrongfully obtain anything of value." But if so, why did he include fraudulent caller ID information with each and every one of his 96 million robocalls? Friendly visitors don't wear disguises to mask who they are. And why did the recorded messages indicate that the calls came from well-known travel or hospitality companies such as Marriott, Expedia, Hilton, and TripAdvisor, even though they were attempting to sell vacation packages at destinations unrelated to those named companies?

Moreover, Mr. Abramovich didn't just have the intent to defraud or cause harm. He actually caused harm. Just ask his victims—a number of whom are elderly—who were duped into purchasing travel deals under false pretenses. Or ask Spōk, a Virginia-based medical paging service whose emergency communications services were disrupted by a flood of robocalls attributed to Mr. Abramovich's companies.

Mr. Abramovich also claims that the consumers who received these robocalls were only harmed if the calls lasted for at least five minutes. So he says he should only be penalized for calls that long or longer. With all due respect, this is a ridiculous argument. I haven't met a single American who likes getting these kinds of robocalls, regardless of length. And in any case, our rules against caller-ID spoofing certainly don't permit spoofed robocalls so long as they string you along for 4:59 or less.

Tough enforcement is a key part of the FCC's robust strategy for combatting illegal robocalls, and this Forfeiture Order represents a big step forward in our enforcement efforts. This is the largest illegal robocalling scheme that the FCC has investigated to date, and we are appropriately imposing a \$120 million forfeiture in response. This is the largest forfeiture in the history of the FCC. Our decision sends a loud and clear message: this FCC is an active cop on the beat and will throw the book at anyone who violates our spoofing and robocall rules and harms consumers.

We would not have arrived at this result without the hard work of the Enforcement Bureau's dedicated staff. They spent countless hours combing through the evidence and pulling investigatory threads together. I want to thank Vilma Anderson, Tamara Baxter, Jonathan Garvin, Lisa Gelb, Rosemary Harold, Richard Hindman, Lisa Landers, Latashia Middleton, Nakasha Ramsey, Stacy Ruffin Smith, Michael Scurato, Daniel Stepanicich, Kristi Thompson, Kimbarly Taylor, Kim Thorne, Melanie Tiano, Bridgette Washington, and Lisa Williford. You will continue to have our support as you seek to bring to justice the scofflaws and scammers who for too long have been bombarding Americans with unlawful robocalls.