Robocalls: The Current Landscape
in the Age of Technology

Swain Wood
General Counsel to North Carolina Attorney General Josh Stein

June 19, 2018
The Problem: An Illustration from NC Consumer Protection Division

- Consumer: a 31-year-old foreign-born citizen.
- Received voicemail from the “IRS” telling her to call back or face arrest.
- Kept on the phone for more than an hour.
- Told that she owed $5,600 in back taxes.
- Threatened with arrest and driver’s license revocation.
- Made partial payment of $2,800 in Google Play and iTunes gift cards.
The Problem Is Getting Worse

• 2015: 14 billion unwanted calls
  2017: 30 billion unwanted calls (115% increase)

• In May 2018:
  • 4.1 billion robocalls nationwide.
  • 28.9 million robocalls in eastern North Carolina.
  • 16.3 million robocalls in Portland.

• As of 2016, estimated $9.5 billion in direct economic losses from robocall scams involving 22.1 million Americans.
The Problem Is Getting Worse

Rising Complaints
Complaints about telemarketers and scammers have steadily increased in recent years, with robocalls identified in the majority of cases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Robocaller</th>
<th>Live caller</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2.2m</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By The New York Times | Source: Federal Trade Commission
Working Towards Solutions

• Enforcement

• Technology
  • SHAKEN/STIR call authentication technology
  • Consumer applications that block calls
    • *E.g.*, Nomorobo, Call Control Home, Digitone Call Blocker (for landlines)

• Regulation and Legislation
The Framework for Regulation and Enforcement

**Federal Actors (FCC and FTC)**
- TCPA, TSR, Do-Not-Call registry, Truth in Caller ID Act
- FCC regulations allowing proactive blocking of robocalls

**State Attorneys General**
- Individual state laws and consumer-protection statutes
- Caller ID authentication (e.g. SHAKEN and STIR)

**Industry Solutions**
- Consumer education
- Consumer-facing apps

**Telemarketers**
**Consumers**
**Telephone Carriers**
Panelists

• **Marguerite Sweeney**, Senior Deputy Attorney General, Data Privacy and Identity Theft Unit, Office of Indiana Attorney General Curtis Hill

• **Maureen Mahoney**, Public Policy Fellow, Consumers Union

• **Kristi Thornton**, Associate Division Chief, Federal Communications Commission

• **Kevin Rupy**, Vice President of Law and Policy, USTelecom

• **Swain Wood**, General Counsel, North Carolina Attorney General Josh Stein (moderator)