



PRESS RELEASE

Attorney General Frosh Announces New Effort to Halt Illegal Robocalls

BALTIMORE, MD (August 22, 2019) – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today announced that as a result of a bipartisan, public/private coalition of 51 attorneys general and 12 phone companies, the phone companies have agreed to adopt [eight principles](#) to fight illegal robocalls. This agreement will help protect phone users from illegal robocalls and make it easier for attorneys general to investigate and prosecute bad actors.

“We are harassed by robocalls every day. It is the number one complaint to attorneys general offices across the country,” said Attorney General Frosh. “The goal of many of the individuals making these calls is to steal your identity or steal your money. These annoying and relentless calls are difficult to track and difficult to prosecute. Most often they originate outside our states and even outside our country. The principles announced today will help prevent these calls and provide law enforcement with the information needed to track down and prosecute those making illegal robocalls.”

The principles address the rapidly increasing robocall problem in two main ways: prevention and enforcement. Phone companies will work to prevent illegal robocalls by:

- Implementing call-blocking technology at the network level at no cost to customers;
- Making available to customers additional, free, easy-to-use call blocking and labeling tools;
- Implementing technology to authenticate that callers are coming from a valid source;
- Monitoring their networks for robocall traffic.

Phone companies will assist attorneys’ general anti-robocall enforcement by:

- Knowing who their customers are so those making robocalls can be identified and investigated;
- Investigating and taking action against suspicious callers – including notifying law enforcement and state attorneys general;
- Working with law enforcement, including state attorneys general, to trace the origins of illegal robocalls;
- Requiring telephone companies with which they contract to cooperate in traceback identification.

Going forward, phone companies will stay in close communication with the coalition of attorneys general to continue to optimize robocall protections as technology and scammer techniques change.

“The principles offer a comprehensive set of best practices that recognizes that no single action or technology is sufficient to curb the scourge of illegal and unwanted robocalls,” said Henning Schulzrinne, Levi Professor of Computer Science and Electrical Engineering at Columbia University “I hope that all parts of the telecommunication industry, both large and small, will commit to rapidly implementing these principles and work with state and federal authorities to make people want to answer their phone again without fear of being defrauded or annoyed.”

The coalition includes attorneys general from all 50 states and Washington, D.C.

The coalition of companies includes AT&T, Bandwidth, CenturyLink, Charter, Comcast, Consolidated, Frontier, Sprint, T-Mobile, US Cellular, Verizon, and Windstream.