



POLICY & ACTION FROM CONSUMER REPORTS

April 21, 2015

Randall Stephenson
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
AT&T Inc.
208 S. Akard Street
Dallas, TX 75202

Re: Provide Consumers Free Solutions To Block Robocalls

Dear Mr. Stephenson:

On behalf of the more than 275,000 consumers who have joined our End Robocalls campaign (www.EndRobocalls.org), we thank you for your response to our February 17, 2015 letter. In our letter, we called on AT&T to provide free solutions to block unwanted auto-dialed telemarketing calls. Unfortunately, your response falls far short of what your customers expect and deserve.

We appreciate that you are working with government, industry and engineering groups to address robocalls once the transition is made to all-IP networks. But these efforts and existing solutions are not effective to address the needs of all consumers. In recent years, the number of unwanted calls has soared. There were more than twice as many complaints to the Federal Trade Commission about Do Not Call List violations in 2014 as there were in 2007. Consumers are tired of waiting for their phone companies to take action and need immediate relief.

We are working to inform consumers about the currently-available options to block robocalls. But these options are limited on traditional landlines - where many consumers report that they receive harassing and deceptive calls.

Technology is available to stop robocalls, but AT&T has been reluctant to offer it to all of its customers. For example, consumers have told us that one of the most effective tools they have found to stop robocalls is Nomorobo, a free service that is only available to select AT&T U-Verse subscribers. Its creator, Aaron Foss, has testified that his solution is compatible with landlines, VoIP, and wireless phones. So far, AT&T has not made it available to traditional landline or wireless customers. Given its popularity, we question why your engineers cannot create software that would provide a similar, or even more effective,

service to all of your subscribers. While you provide some services for consumers seeking to avoid unwanted calls, they are not free, nor are they available to all of your customers.

In addition, there is technology currently available in Canada for traditional landline users that has proven effective in limiting unwanted robocalls. Unfortunately, AT&T and other phone companies have not made similar technology available to U.S. customers. There are some commercially available call-blocking devices on the market, but they put the onus on consumers to address unwanted robocalls. Consumers should not have to pay for this protection.

We understand your concerns about blocking legitimate robocalls, but believe that consumers should have the right to opt-in to these services and decide for themselves whether the benefits outweigh any potential downside. In addition, consumers could provide their phone carrier with a "whitelist" of trusted numbers they want to go through to address this concern.

We, along with the Federal Trade Commission, share your conclusion that phone companies have full legal authority to offer free, effective, customer-directed call blocking tools. While no robocall solution will be 100 percent effective, your engineers have the capability to stop the vast majority of them. Any limitations of the service could be conveyed to customers in a disclosure.

As a leading telecommunications organization, we encourage you to take initiative on this issue. Your customers are sick and tired of being inundated with a daily barrage of unwanted robocalls and are counting on you to provide them with relief.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tim Marvin", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tim Marvin
EndRobocalls.org Campaign
Consumers Union