Dear Mssrs. Stephenson, McAdam, Claure, Legere and Post:

As state Attorneys General, we are on the front lines of consumer protection for millions of Americans harassed by unwanted and unwelcome robocalls. Though our offices work diligently to prosecute those who violate state and federal laws intended to prevent such calls, our enforcement efforts alone cannot stop the problem. The better solution is to stop intrusive calls before they ever reach the consumer. To that end, we call on you to take full advantage of the opportunity provided by the rule clarification recently adopted by the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) and offer call-blocking technology to your consumers.

Previous discussions regarding the implementation of call-blocking technologies were cut short by concerns that such technology may violate federal law. At a July 2013 hearing before a Senate subcommittee, for example, representatives from the US Telecom Association and CTIA testified that “legal barriers prevent[] carriers from implementing advanced call-blocking technology to reduce the number of unwanted telemarketing calls.”

In response to that concern, thirty-nine Attorneys General sent a letter to the FCC last September asking the Commission to issue an official opinion clarifying that telephone providers are not prohibited by law from offering, at the customer’s request, technology to block unwanted calls or texts.

On June 18, 2015, the FCC responded, formally adopting a rule clarification, clearly stating that federal law does not prohibit telecommunication service providers from offering, upon a customer’s
request, services intended to block unwanted calls. This clarification by the FCC should remove any doubt about your legal authority to empower consumers by providing call-blocking technology to help stop robocalls, scam text messages and unwanted telemarketing calls.

Since call-blocking options already exist for Voice over Internet Protocol or VoIP phone service (NoMoRobo.com) and Android cell phones (Call Control), landline and wireless carriers should move swiftly to implement and inform consumers of these options.

Every year, our offices are flooded with consumer complaints pleading for a solution to stop intrusive robocalls. Your organizations are now poised to offer your customers the help they need. We urge you to act without delay.

Respectfully,

Greg Zoeller
Indiana Attorney General

Chris Koster
Missouri Attorney General

Luther Strange
Alabama Attorney General

Craig W. Richards
Alaska Attorney General

Leslie Rutledge
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