



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Chairman Feinstein, Senator Specter Introduce Measure to Regulate Robocalls

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), Chairman of the Senate Rules and Administration Committee, and Senator Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) today introduced legislation to regulate robocalls.

The measure introduced by Feinstein and Specter would not ban robocalls, but instead places sensible restrictions on how and when the calls can be made – including limiting the hours within which calls can be made, limiting the number of calls that can be made to each household, and requiring callers to identify themselves at the beginning of the call. Senators Daniel Inouye (D-HI) and Richard Durbin (D-IL) cosponsored the bill.

“During this primary season, we have heard stories about people being called over and over again, at all hours of the day and night. I believe we need sensible guidelines in place,” Chairman Feinstein said. **“Something must be done about the worst of these calls.**

The bill that we have introduced today does not ban robocalls. It merely provides a reasonable framework. It’s a sensible solution that will protect American families from being inundated by calls through the day and night.”

“This legislation creates a much-needed structure for addressing the harassing computer-automated calls that are increasingly used in the days leading up to an election,” Specter said. **“The Supreme Court has stated that the privacy of citizens in their homes is an interest of the ‘highest order,’ and this bill provides a reasonable and measured approach to protecting that interest.”**

Robocalls are pre-recorded messages that can be sent out to tens of thousands of voters at a minor cost through computer automation.

Concerns have been raised about abuses of this practice, including calls being received late into the night, callers receiving 10, 20 or even 30 calls a night, and callers using misleading information.

Specifically, the bill would:

- **Ban calls to any person from 9 PM in the evening and 8 AM in the morning.**
- **Bans more than two calls per organization to the same telephone number per day.**
- **Require disclosure at the beginning of the call the identity of the group making the call.**
- **Require the caller to identify the call as pre-recorded.**
- **Ban the calling organization from blocking their “caller identification” number.**
- **Empower the Federal Elections Commission (FEC) to file civil fines against violators.** Allows individuals to sue to stop the abusive calls.

These prohibitions do not apply for volunteer, “in person” phone banks. The bill would be effective 30 days prior to a primary and 60 days prior to a general election.

Background

Commercial calls are already limited by the Federal Trade Commission’s “Do Not Call” list—with millions of individuals subscribing. But political calls were specifically exempted from that list.

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