

FTC Warns 19 VoIP Service Providers That ‘Assisting and Facilitating’ Illegal Telemarketing or Robocalling is Against the Law

For Release
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Federal Trade Commission staff sent letters to 19 Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service providers warning them that “assisting and facilitating” illegal telemarketing or robocalling is against the law.

“VoIP service providers play a unique role in the robocall ecosystem, allowing fraudsters and abusive telemarketers to call consumers at a fraction of a penny per minute,” said FTC Bureau of Consumer Protection Director Andrew Smith. “These warning letters put VoIP providers on notice that we will take action when they knowingly facilitate illegal robocalls.”

The [letters warn the VoIP service providers](#) that the FTC may take legal action against them if they assist a seller or telemarketer who they know, or **consciously avoid knowing**, is violating the agency’s Telemarketing Sales Rule (TSR). The FTC is not disclosing the names of the companies and/or individuals to whom it sent the warnings.

The letters note several types of conduct that may violate the TSR, including:

- making a false or misleading statement to induce a consumer to buy something or contribute to a charity;
- misrepresenting a seller or telemarketer’s affiliation with any government agency;
- transmitting false or deceptive caller ID numbers;
- initiating pre-recorded telemarketing robocalls, unless the seller has express written permission to call; and
- initiating telemarketing calls to consumers whose phone numbers are on the National Do Not Call Registry, with certain exceptions.

The letters stress that combatting illegal telemarketing is a top priority of the Commission, with a special emphasis on stopping illegal robocalls. They cite two cases the FTC has brought in this area, one against a defendant named [James B. Christiano](#) and another against a VoIP service provider called [Globex Telecom](#).

The FTC can seek civil penalties and court injunctions to stop TSR violations. It also can seek money to refund to consumers who were defrauded via illegal telemarketing calls.

The Federal Trade Commission works to promote competition, and [protect and educate consumers](#). You can [learn more about consumer topics](#) and file a [consumer complaint online](#) or by calling 1-877-FTC-HELP (382-4357). Like the FTC on [Facebook](#), follow us on [Twitter](#), read our [blogs](#), and [subscribe to press releases](#) for the latest FTC news and resources.

Press Release Reference:

[Court Halts Operations of VoIP Service Provider after the FTC and Ohio Alleged that it Helped Promote Credit Card Interest Reduction Scheme
FTC Sues to Stop Two Operations Responsible for Making Billions of Illegal Robocalls](#)

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