

June 23, 2022 Sent via USPS Certified Mail



RE: Assisting/Facilitating Robocalls into Ohio

Dear

The Ohio Attorney General places a priority on investigating illegal robocalls, enforcing do-notcall laws and helping constituents who are scammed or harassed by illegal robocalls. Our office regularly obtains traceback information from the Industry Traceback Group¹ regarding fraudulent, abusive and/or unlawful robocalls. This information-sharing assists our office in investigating the nature of the calls and the providers who originate and facilitate them.

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Pursuant to its authority under the Telemarketing and Consumer Fraud and Abuse Prevention Act, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has prescribed rules prohibiting deceptive and abusive telemarketing acts or practices, including the use of prerecorded messages, by promulgating the Telemarketing Sales Rule (TSR).² It is a further violation of the TSR to provide "substantial assistance or support to any seller or telemarketer" when you "know[] or consciously avoid[] knowing that the seller or telemarketer is engaged in any [deceptive or abusive] act or practice" that violates Sections 310.3(a), (c), or (d), or 310.4 of the TSR.³

The Ohio Attorney General, as well as other State Attorneys General across the country, have concurrent authority with the FTC to enforce the TSR.⁴ Accordingly, in addition to being subject to enforcement actions by the FTC, violators of the TSR may be subject to enforcement actions by State Attorneys General. For example, in 2019 the Ohio Attorney General and the FTC filed against VoIP service provider Globex Telecom, Inc. for violating the TSR by assisting and facilitating telemarketers that it knew or consciously avoided knowing were making misrepresentations to consumers about goods or services offered or sold using unlawful, prerecorded messages.⁵

¹ The Industry Traceback Group is the current consortium registered with the Federal Communications Commission pursuant to 47 C.F.R. 1203 to lead private industry efforts to traced the origin of suspected unlawful robocalls as required by the TRACED Act, See, Pub. L. No. 116-105, § 13(d), 133 Stat. 3274 (2019).

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⁵ See FTC v. Educare Centre Services, Inc., No. 3:19-cv-00196 (W.D. Tex. Am. Compl. filed Dec. 3, 2019, Final Orders filed Sept. 22, 2020).

Moreover, State Attorneys General also have concurrent authority with the Federal Communications Commission to enforce the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA), which has prescribed rules restricting calls made with Automated Telephone Dialing Systems or delivering pre-recorded or artificially-voice messages and prohibiting calls to numbers on the National Do-Not-Call Registry, as well as some caller ID spoofing.⁶ Similar to the enforcement provisions of the TSR, the Ohio Attorney General is also authorized to investigate and take enforcement actions for violations of the TCPA.

Recent additions to O.R.C. 109.87 authorize the Ohio Attorney General to take enforcement authority in state court against certain third parties when they knowingly participate or willfully turn a blind eye to illegal practices. The changes to O.R.C. 109.87 prohibit providing substantial assistance or support to a caller when they know or consciously avoid knowing the caller is violating the TCPA. The changes provide the Ohio Attorney General with the tools to hold certain participants in these schemes accountable – not just the dialer. Additionally, violations of any part of O.R.C. 109.87 now also qualify as a violation of Ohio's Consumer Sales Practices Act if the deceptive act occurs within the course of a consumer transaction.

In addition to authority to enforce the federal statutes referenced above, Ohio also has a state statute, the Telephone Solicitation Sales Act, ORC. 4719.01 et seq., which requires non-exempt telephone solicitors placing calls into Ohio, or calling from Ohio, to have a surety bond of \$50,000.00 on file and be registered with our office prior to soliciting to Ohio or from a location in Ohio. A list of telephone solicitors registered to solicit in or from Ohio is available on our website at www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov.

We request you review this letter in detail and ensure that your business follows all applicable regulations referenced above. If further investigations find that your customers continue to engage in illegal activity and you continue to assist and facilitate such activity, our office may pursue enforcement action.

You may reach me at my telephone number listed below should you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

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Erin B. Leahy Senior Assistant Attorney General Robocall Enforcement Unit Consumer Protection Section Office of Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost 30 East Broad Street, 14th Floor Columbus, Ohio 43215 Office number: (614) 752-4730 Erin.Leahy@OhioAGO.gov

⁶ 47 U.S.C. § 227; 47 C.F.R. Part 64.1200.



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Based on information obtained in those tracebacks, it appears that your customer, may be involved in such illegal activity. We are writing to inform you about the laws, regulations and enforcement actions that may bear upon your business activities. In addition, it appears your customer has also failed to respond fully and in a timely manner to traceback requests as required by 47 C.F.R. § 64.1200(n)(1).

Pursuant to its authority under the Telemarketing and Consumer Fraud and Abuse Prevention Act, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has prescribed rules prohibiting deceptive and abusive telemarketing acts or practices, including the use of prerecorded messages, by promulgating the Telemarketing Sales Rule (TSR).² It is a further violation of the TSR to provide "substantial assistance or support to any seller or telemarketer" when you "know[] or consciously avoid[] knowing that the seller or telemarketer is engaged in any [deceptive or abusive] act or practice" that violates Sections 310.3(a), (c), or (d), or 310.4 of the TSR.³

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In addition to authority to enforce the federal statutes referenced above, Ohio also has a state statute, the Telephone Solicitation Sales Act, ORC. 4719.01 et seq., which requires non-exempt telephone solicitors placing calls into Ohio, or calling from Ohio, to have a surety bond of \$50,000.00 on file and be registered with our office prior to soliciting to Ohio or from a location in Ohio. A list of telephone solicitors registered to solicit in or from Ohio is available on our website at www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov.

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Recent additions to O.R.C. 109.87 authorize the Ohio Attorney General to take enforcement authority in state court against certain third parties when they knowingly participate or willfully turn a blind eye to illegal practices. The changes to O.R.C. 109.87 prohibit providing substantial assistance or support to a caller when they know or consciously avoid knowing the caller is violating the TCPA. The changes provide the Ohio Attorney General with the tools to hold certain participants in these schemes accountable – not just the dialer. Additionally, violations of any part of O.R.C. 109.87 now also qualify as a violation of Ohio's Consumer Sales Practices Act if the deceptive act occurs within the course of a consumer transaction.

In addition to authority to enforce the federal statutes referenced above, Ohio also has a state statute, the Telephone Solicitation Sales Act, ORC. 4719.01 et seq., which requires non-exempt telephone solicitors placing calls into Ohio, or calling from Ohio, to have a surety bond of \$50,000.00 on file and be registered with our office prior to soliciting to Ohio or from a location in Ohio. A list of telephone solicitors registered to solicit in or from Ohio is available on our website at www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov.

We request you review this letter in detail and ensure that your business follows all applicable regulations referenced above. If further investigations find that your customers continue to engage in illegal activity and you continue to assist and facilitate such activity, our office may pursue enforcement action.

You may reach me at my telephone number listed below should you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

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Erin B. Leahy Senior Assistant Attorney General Robocall Enforcement Unit Consumer Protection Section Office of Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost 30 East Broad Street, 14th Floor Columbus, Ohio 43215 Office number: (614) 752-4730 Erin.Leahy@OhioAGO.gov

⁵ See FTC v. Educare Centre Services, Inc., No. 3:19-cv-00196 (W.D. Tex. Am. Compl. filed Dec. 3, 2019, Final Orders filed Sept. 22, 2020).

⁶ 47 U.S.C. § 227; 47 C.F.R. Part 64.1200.



June 23, 2022 Sent via USPS Certified Mail



RE: Assisting/Facilitating Robocalls into Ohio

Dear

The Ohio Attorney General places a priority on investigating illegal robocalls, enforcing do-notcall laws and helping constituents who are scammed or harassed by illegal robocalls. Our office regularly obtains traceback information from the Industry Traceback Group¹ regarding fraudulent, abusive and/or unlawful robocalls. This information-sharing assists our office in investigating the nature of the calls and the providers who originate and facilitate them.

Based on information obtained in those tracebacks, it appears that your customer, may be involved in such illegal activity. We are writing to inform you about the laws, regulations and enforcement actions that may bear upon your business activities. In addition, it appears your customer has also failed to respond fully and in a timely manner to traceback requests as required by 47 C.F.R. § 64.1200(n)(1).

Pursuant to its authority under the Telemarketing and Consumer Fraud and Abuse Prevention Act, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has prescribed rules prohibiting deceptive and abusive telemarketing acts or practices, including the use of prerecorded messages, by promulgating the Telemarketing Sales Rule (TSR).² It is a further violation of the TSR to provide "substantial assistance or support to any seller or telemarketer" when you "know[] or consciously avoid[] knowing that the seller or telemarketer is engaged in any [deceptive or abusive] act or practice" that violates Sections 310.3(a), (c), or (d), or 310.4 of the TSR.³

The Ohio Attorney General, as well as other State Attorneys General across the country, have concurrent authority with the FTC to enforce the TSR.⁴ Accordingly, in addition to being subject to enforcement actions by the FTC, violators of the TSR may be subject to enforcement actions by State Attorneys General. For example, in 2019 the Ohio Attorney General and the FTC filed against VoIP service

¹ The Industry Traceback Group is the current consortium registered with the Federal Communications Commission pursuant to 47 C.F.R. 1203 to lead private industry efforts to traced the origin of suspected unlawful robocalls as required by the TRACED Act, See, Pub. L. No. 116-105, § 13(d), 133 Stat. 3274 (2019).

² 15 U.S.C. §§ 6101–6108; 16 C.F.R. Part 310.

³ 16 C.F.R. § 310.3(b); *see also United States v. Palumbo*, No. 1:20-cv-00473, slip op. at 2, 6 (E.D.N.Y. filed Mar. 24, 2020) (granting an injunction to prohibit a VoIP provider from providing any call-termination services or carrying any VoIP calls in the United States, based on the court's determination that, "[w]hether by design or not, the telecommunications 'intermediary' industry is set up perfectly to allow fraudulent operators to rotate telephone numbers endlessly and blame other parties for the fraudulent call traffic they carry").

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provider Globex Telecom, Inc. for violating the TSR by assisting and facilitating telemarketers that it knew or consciously avoided knowing were making misrepresentations to consumers about goods or services offered or sold using unlawful, prerecorded messages.⁵

Moreover, State Attorneys General also have concurrent authority with the Federal Communications Commission to enforce the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA), which has prescribed rules restricting calls made with Automated Telephone Dialing Systems or delivering pre-recorded or artificially-voice messages and prohibiting calls to numbers on the National Do-Not-Call Registry, as well as some caller ID spoofing.⁶ Similar to the enforcement provisions of the TSR, the Ohio Attorney General is also authorized to investigate and take enforcement actions for violations of the TCPA.

Recent additions to O.R.C. 109.87 authorize the Ohio Attorney General to take enforcement authority in state court against certain third parties when they knowingly participate or willfully turn a blind eye to illegal practices. The changes to O.R.C. 109.87 prohibit providing substantial assistance or support to a caller when they know or consciously avoid knowing the caller is violating the TCPA. The changes provide the Ohio Attorney General with the tools to hold certain participants in these schemes accountable – not just the dialer. Additionally, violations of any part of O.R.C. 109.87 now also qualify as a violation of Ohio's Consumer Sales Practices Act if the deceptive act occurs within the course of a consumer transaction.

In addition to authority to enforce the federal statutes referenced above, Ohio also has a state statute, the Telephone Solicitation Sales Act, ORC. 4719.01 et seq., which requires non-exempt telephone solicitors placing calls into Ohio, or calling from Ohio, to have a surety bond of \$50,000.00 on file and be registered with our office prior to soliciting to Ohio or from a location in Ohio. A list of telephone solicitors registered to solicit in or from Ohio is available on our website at www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov.

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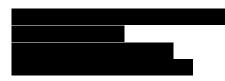
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