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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

CA: Robocalls on the Rise in 2021



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody today issued a Consumer Alert highlighting a staggering increase in the number of robocalls flooding Floridians' phones. According to the Robocall Index, so far in 2021, robocalls have increased by nearly 450 million calls, or 16% when compared to the same time period last year. The Federal Communications Commission cites robocalls as the agency's top consumer complaint. Attorney General Moody is working with attorneys general from across the country in a coordinated effort to fight back against illegal robocalls to protect Floridians from scams connected to calls.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "The pandemic changed the way we work, learn and socialize—further popularizing the tools we use to communicate remotely, including cellphones. With this rise in cellphone use, it is no surprise that we are seeing an increase in the number of robocalls targeting Floridians. Please remain vigilant when receiving calls from unknown sources and never give personal or financial information in response to an unwanted solicitation."

In 2019, Attorney General Moody, attorneys general from other states and 15 phone companies adopted the Anti-Robocall Principles to fight robocalls through prevention and enforcement solutions. Since then, companies that agreed to the principles have:

- - Identified more than 52 billion spam or spoofed calls;
  - Authenticated the caller ID numbers of hundreds of billions of calls; and
  - Blocked more than 32.5 billion spam, spoofed or illegal calls.

Attorney General Moody continues to work with other states and phone companies to rein in the number of calls and stop scams connected to automated messages. Last month, Attorney General Moody urged the FCC to fight back against the recent scourge of illegal robocalls by moving up the deadline for smaller telephone companies to implement caller ID technology. For more information, click here.

To guard against robocall scams, Attorney General Moody is offering Floridians the following recommendations:

- Hang up on robocalls offering products or services;
- Do not trust caller ID displays—allow unknown numbers to go to voicemail;
- If you get an unexpected call from your bank or utility provider, hang up and call the entity directly before you provide personal or financial information;
- Fact-check information given to you by suspicious calls; and
- Never give your personal or financial information to an unknown caller.

The Federal Trade Commission released resource guides with tips on how to stop unwanted robocalls from overwhelming a phone. Floridians should report robocalls to the FTC online at FTC.gov/Complaint.

Attorney General Moody has taken multiple actions to stop robocall scams. Recent actions include:

- In March 2019, Attorney General Moody sent a letter to the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation supporting the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence Act;
- In May 2019, Attorney General Moody urged the FCC to enforce rules against caller ID spoofing in text messages and alternative voice servers and to adopt provisions in the FCC appropriations authorization bill, known as the Ray Baum's Act of 2018;
- In June 2019, Attorney General Moody, the FTC and 43 other federal, state and local agencies participated in Operation Call It Quits, a national campaign designed to educate consumers about types of robocall scams, enforcement actions brought by the FTC and participating attorneys general and tips to help reduce unwanted calls and avoid falling victim to deceptive sales pitches;
- In August 2019, Attorney General Moody partnered with 12 voice-service providers to adopt anti-robocall principles to help block and trace illegal robocalls;
- In May 2020, Attorney General Moody joined a bipartisan coalition of 52 attorneys general urging USTelecom to further develop tracebacks and other tools to improve enforcement against illegal robocalls; and
- In August 2021, Attorney General Moody disbursed nearly half a million dollars to nonprofits following the shutdown of an unlawful charity telefunding operation.

Anyone who receives a robocall can file a complaint with the Florida Attorney General's Office online at MyFloridaLegal.com or by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM.

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The Florida Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division issues Consumer Alerts to inform Floridians of emerging scams, new methods used to commit fraud, increased reports of common scams, or any other deceptive practice. Consumer Alerts are designed to notify Floridians about scams and available refunds in an effort to prevent financial losses or other harm caused by deceptive practices. Anyone encountering a scam should report the incident to the Florida Attorney General's Office by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or visiting MyFloridaLegal.com. To view recent Consumer Alerts and for other information about avoiding scams, visit MyFloridaLegal.com/ConsumerAlert.