



NEWS

U.S. Office of Consumer Affairs

For Immediate Release
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Contact: Theresa Michel
202/634-4310

PRESIDENT BUSH SIGNS BILL REGULATING UNSOLICITED MACHINE DIALED TELEPHONE CALLS

Washington, D.C. - "President Bush signed the Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991 (S. 1462)," stated Ann Windham Wallace, his principal adviser on consumer issues and Director of the U.S. Office of Consumer Affairs (USOCA). "For every consumer whose dinner has been interrupted by unwanted machine-generated telephone solicitations, this bill is a victory."

This legislation, to be administered by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), benefits consumers because they can now control which solicitations are allowed into their homes. This control will result from mechanisms, to be determined by the FCC, that will permit consumers to avoid receiving unwanted solicitations. The bill seeks to curtail intrusive solicitations while balancing the need for legitimate business practices and individual consumer privacy.

Each day, over 300,000 solicitors call more than 18 million Americans. A survey on consumer privacy, recently released by Equifax corporation and Louis Harris, indicates that only 1% of the public regards unsolicited telephone calls "primarily as

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useful." A total of 82% of those polled view unsolicited telemarketing calls negatively, with 55% regarding them "more as a nuisance" and 27% regarding them "more as an invasion of privacy."

Major provisions of the bill include:

Unsolicited machine dialed telephone calls - The FCC is directed to implement regulations that will restrict the random, machine-generated sales calls that consumers find annoying, while allowing the continuation of legitimate business practices. Calls to health care facilities or emergency lines, or calls for which the called party must pay, such as to cellular phones and pagers will be prohibited.

Unsolicited Telemarketing Calls - The bill directs the FCC to determine an appropriate method so that consumers not wishing to receive telemarketing calls can make their desires known. The FCC is also directed to prescribe regulations for protecting privacy rights in an efficient, effective, and economic manner, without imposing additional telephone charges on consumers.

Unsolicited Advertising by Fax - The bill prohibits unsolicited advertising by fax.

The United States Office of Consumer Affairs coordinates consumer policy for the Bush Administration, improves consumer programs, and ensures that the consumer perspective is represented in federal activities.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 20 , 1991

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Today I have signed into law S. 1462, the "Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991." This legislation is designed for the laudable purpose of protecting the privacy rights of telephone users. However, the Act could also lead to unnecessary regulation or curtailment of legitimate business activities. That is why the Administration opposed it when it was pending before the Congress. Indeed, the Administration is firmly opposed to current congressional efforts to re-regulate the telecommunications industry.

I have signed the bill because it gives the Federal Communications Commission ample authority to preserve legitimate business practices. These include automated calls to consumers with whom a business has preexisting business relationships, such as calls to notify consumers of the arrival of merchandise ordered from a catalog. I also understand that the Act gives the Commission flexibility to adapt its rules to changing market conditions. I fully expect that the Commission will use these authorities to ensure that the requirements of the Act are met at the least possible cost to the economy.

GEORGE BUSH

THE WHITE HOUSE,

December 20, 1991.

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