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For Immediate Release

**ACTING CHAIRWOMAN ROSENWORCEL KICKS OFF
ANTI-ROBOCALL AGENDA**

Issues Largest Robocall Fine in FCC History, Demands Providers Cease-and-Desist From Illegal Robocalls, Launches Robocall Response Team, Renews Federal-State Collaboration

WASHINGTON, March 17, 2021—Today, FCC Acting Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel announced her first set of anti-robocall actions during the March Open Meeting to kick off efforts to combat unwanted robocalls.

These actions include issuing the largest robocall fine in FCC history, demanding certain voice providers cease-and-desist from facilitating illegal robocalls, launching a Robocall Response Team, and delivering letters to the Federal Trade Commission, Department of Justice, and the National Association of State Attorneys General to renew state-federal partnerships to combat the proliferation of illegal robocalls.

“Unwanted robocalls are not only a nuisance, but they also pose a serious risk to consumers who can inadvertently share sensitive, personal information in response to bad actors’ malicious schemes. I’m proud to unveil my first set of actions to put a renewed focus on what the FCC can do to combat the issue that we receive the most complaints about. I believe closer coordination within the agency and between federal and state partners can help in addressing this consumer epidemic. Also, today’s cease and desist letters should serve as a warning sign to other entities that believe the FCC has turned a blind eye to this issue. We certainly haven’t and we’re coming for you,” **said Rosenworcel.**

Specifically, Rosenworcel’s anti-robocall initiatives include:

The issuance of a **\$225 million fine to Texas telemarketers**—the largest fine in FCC history—for illegally spoofing approximately **1 billion robocalls** to sell short-term, limited-duration health insurance plans. The robocalls falsely claimed to offer health insurance plans from well-known health insurance companies such as Aetna, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Cigna, and UnitedHealth Group.

The delivery of **cease-and-desist letters to six voice providers** that have consistently violated FCC guidelines on the use of autodialed and prerecorded voice message calls and in one case had received prior agency warnings to stop carrying out suspected illegal robocall traffic operations.

The recipients of the cease-and-desist letters include:

- **RSCom**, a Canada based company, continues to transmit robocalls despite having received a warning on May 20, 2020 to cease carrying suspected illegal robocall traffic

immediately. Since the May 20, 2020 warning letter, RSCom has appeared in 112 tracebacks conducted by the Traceback Consortium. These traceback operations involved COVID-19 scam calls, Social Security Administration and Internal Revenue Service imposter scam calls, Apple imposter scam calls, electric utility disconnection scam calls, and fraudulent sweepstakes winner calls.

- **Stratics Networks**, a Canada based company that transmits and originates robocall traffic, has been found to help facilitate fraudulent calls related to COVID hardship programs, student loan offers, political campaign calls, and discounts and upgrades for services through AT&T and DirecTV.
- **Yodel Technologies**, a Florida based provider that transmits and originates robocalls, claimed to obtain call recipients' consent based on general consumer disclaimers on websites advertising sweepstakes offers or insurance. Yodel has been found to facilitate fraudulent calls related to Social Security Administration imposters, health insurance calls, and debt reduction services for mortgages and credit cards.
- **Icon Global**, a U.K. based company that transmits and originates robocall traffic, has been found to facilitate fraudulent calls inundating the D.C. metropolitan police department with robocalls, Apple imposter calls, and Social Security Administration imposter calls.
- **IDT Corporation**, a New Jersey based multinational provider, is believed to transmit illegal robocall traffic on behalf of one or more of its clients. Those robocalls include: COVID-19 fraudulent incentives and health insurance related calls; various Social Security Administration Scams; fraudulent calls threatening to disconnect utilities requesting payment; fictional refunds from Amazon and computer services providers calls; and credit card fraud related calls. IDT failed to respond to several Industry Traceback Group inquiries, including a recent September 2020 notice.
- **Third Rock Telecom**, a Canada based provider, is suspected to transmit illegal robocall traffic on behalf of one or more of its clients. Those robocalls include fictional Apple/iCloud account breach related calls; various Social Security Administration Scams; credit card fraud; fraudulent business listing allegedly approved by Google; and debt reduction offers under suspected fictional COVID-19 hardship programs.

The robocall cease-and-desist letters instruct the six identified voice providers to investigate and, if necessary, cease transmitting the identified traffic immediately and take steps to prevent their network from continuing to be a source of apparent illegal robocalls. Downstream voice service providers will be authorized to block all voice provider traffic if the warned providers do not take steps to effectively mitigate illegal traffic within 48 hours or if they fail to inform the FCC and the Traceback Consortium within 14 days of these letters the steps they've taken to implement effective measures to prevent customers from using your network to make illegal calls. Failure to act within the deadline may result in the FCC issuing a notice to all U.S.-based voice service providers that they may permanently block *all* call traffic transmitting from their networks.

The launch of a **Robocall Response Team**, a group of 51 FCC staff members across six bureaus and offices tasked with coordinating and implementing the agency's anti-robocall efforts. The Robocall Response Team will bring together Commission efforts to enforce the law against providers of illegal robocalls, develop new policies to authenticate calls and trace back illegal robocalls, and educate providers and other stakeholders about what they can do to help.

The delivery of **letters to the Federal Trade Commission, Department of Justice, and the National Association of State Attorneys General** seeking to renew partnerships to combat robocalls. The letters highlight a renewed interest in coordination between the FCC and other federal and state entities could ultimately benefit consumers and expresses Rosenworcel's commitment to fight robocall scams by leveraging the knowledge, skills, and jurisdictional

reach of cooperating organizations to share critical investigative information and collaborate on cases.

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