

STATE OF NEW YORK

675--A

2019-2020 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

(Prefiled)

January 9, 2019

Introduced by M. of A. NIOU, ZEBROWSKI, COLTON, RICHARDSON, FITZPATRICK, EICHENSTEIN, KIM, ENGLEBRIGHT, FRONTUS, FAHY -- read once and referred to the Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the public service law, in relation to limiting robocalls to state residents and to require telephone service providers to offer free call mitigation technology to telephone customers

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "robocall
2 prevention act".

3 § 2. The public service law is amended by adding a new section 91-b to
4 read as follows:

5 § 91-b. Robocalls. 1. As used in this section:

6 (a) "Robocall" means a call made, including a text message sent:

7 (i) using equipment that makes a series of calls to stored telephone
8 numbers, including numbers stored on a list, or to telephone numbers
9 produced using a random or sequential number generator, except for a
10 call made using only equipment that the caller demonstrates requires
11 substantial additional human intervention to dial or place a call after
12 a human initiates the call or series of calls; or

13 (ii) using an artificial or prerecorded voice.

14 (b) "Call mitigation technology" means technology that identifies an
15 incoming call or text message as being, or as probably being, a robocall
16 and, on that basis, blocks the call or message, diverts it to the called
17 person's answering system, or otherwise prevents it from being completed
18 to the called person, except that it permits a call or text so identi-
19 fied to be completed when it is identified as being made by a law
20 enforcement or public safety entity, or when it is identified as origi-

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 nating from a caller with respect to whom the called person has provided
2 prior express consent to receive such a call or message and has not
3 revoked that consent.

4 (c) "Prior express consent" means agreement provided by a called
5 person to allow the caller to make a robocall to the called person's
6 telephone, in relation to the specific subject matter for which the call
7 is made.

8 2. (a) It shall be unlawful for any person or entity to make any robo-
9 call other than a call made for emergency purposes or made with the
10 prior express consent of the called party, to any telephone number owned
11 by a person or entity in the state. A customer's prior express consent
12 can be revoked by the customer at any time in any reasonable manner,
13 regardless of the context in which the owner or user of the telephone
14 provided consent.

15 (b) The commission shall prescribe regulations to implement the
16 provisions of this subdivision, and may exempt from the requirements of
17 this subdivision, subject to such conditions as the commission may
18 prescribe, calls made to a residential telephone line that are not made
19 for a commercial purpose.

20 3. (a) A telephone service provider that provides telephone service to
21 customers residing in the state shall make call mitigation technology
22 available to any such customer, upon request, and at no additional
23 charge. Such provider shall also offer to any such customer the ability
24 to have the provider prevent calls and text messages identified as orig-
25 inating from a particular person from being completed to the called
26 person, upon request, and at no additional charge.

27 (b) The commission shall prescribe regulations to implement the
28 requirements of this subdivision, including, if appropriate, a reason-
29 able delay in requiring implementation and offering of call mitigation
30 technology if for good cause, taking into account the consumer
31 protection purposes of this section, and including procedures for
32 addressing incidents in which a call wanted by the customer is prevented
33 from reaching the customer.

34 4. (a) Whenever there shall be a violation of this section, an appli-
35 cation may be made by the attorney general in the name of the people of
36 the state of New York to a court or justice having jurisdiction to issue
37 an injunction, and upon notice to the defendant of not less than five
38 days, to enjoin and restrain the continuance of such violations; and if
39 it shall appear to the satisfaction of the court or justice, that the
40 defendant has, in fact, violated this section an injunction may be
41 issued by such court or justice enjoining and restraining any further
42 violation, without requiring proof that any person has, in fact, been
43 injured or damaged thereby. In any such proceeding, the court may make
44 allowances to the attorney general as provided in paragraph six of
45 subdivision (a) of section eighty-three hundred three of the civil prac-
46 tice law and rules, and direct restitution. Whenever the court shall
47 determine that a violation of subdivision two of this section has
48 occurred, the court may impose a civil penalty of not more than two
49 thousand dollars per call, up to a total of not more than twenty thou-
50 sand dollars, for calls placed in violation of such subdivision within a
51 continuous seventy-two hour period. In connection with any such proposed
52 application, the attorney general is authorized to take proof and make a
53 determination of the relevant facts and to issue subpoenas in accordance
54 with the civil practice law and rules.

55 (b) In addition to the right of action granted to the attorney general
56 pursuant to this section, any person harmed by a violation of the

1 provisions of subdivision two of this section, or of any regulations
2 promulgated by the commission relating to this section, may bring an
3 action in any court of competent jurisdiction:

4 (i) to enjoin such violation; and/or

5 (ii) to recover for actual monetary loss from such violation or to
6 receive five hundred dollars in damages for such violation, whichever is
7 greater.

8 (c) If the court finds that the defendant willfully or knowingly
9 violated the provisions of subdivision two of this section or any regu-
10 lations prescribed hereunder, the court may, in its discretion, increase
11 the amount of the monetary award to an amount equal to not more than
12 three times the amount available pursuant to paragraph (b) of this
13 subdivision.

14 (d) No action to recover damages for a violation of the provisions of
15 this section may be brought more than four years after the alleged
16 violation occurred.

17 § 3. This act shall take effect on the thirtieth day after it shall
18 have become a law. Effective immediately, the addition, amendment
19 and/or repeal of any rule or regulation necessary for the implementation
20 of this act on its effective date are authorized and directed to be made
21 and completed on or before such effective date.