

October 10, 2018

Mr. Donald J Trump
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

First of all, thanks for all you have done and all you are still trying to do to “Make America Great.” I was hoping that I would not have to write this letter to you as I have never written to POTUS in my life. However, I’ve decided since I am going to be sending the same or similar letters to several people (the Department of Justice, the Senators and Representatives of the State of Mississippi, the Governor of the State of Mississippi and the Attorney General of the state of Mississippi) I thought it well to send a letter to you also.

I, like many American Citizens, have a major complaint. I should be bringing this complaint to the FTC and FCC – though I’ve recently learned that just in 2016 and 2017 they have been burdened with no less 7.9 million such complaints. The number was 3.4 million in 2016 growing to 4.5 million in 2017 and who knows how many million in 2018 so far. Apparently, while they are doing what is in their power – charging fines – I need to let you know that this simply is not enough.

The problem, sir, that I am referring to is the problem of nuisance phone calls by Robots using “Spoofed” telephone numbers. We did not receive such calls until the National Do Not Call list was created. Since then criminals have found a way to get around that list. Now it is my understanding from the Mississippi Attorney General’s office that spoofing a phone number, so that a different number shows on the caller ID than the number actually calling, is not a crime unless the perpetrator of the call is attempting to defraud someone. I say that simply changing a number from the real number to another number in an attempt to get the phone answered is a fraud and it should be prosecuted as such.

I recently listened to a 2.5-hour meeting between the FTC and the FCC in which they are telling us what they are doing to stop this nonsense – and while they are doing what they can – it is not enough. Not only are old numbers no longer working being stolen and spoofed into caller IDs ... but now they are moving to what is called “Neighbor Spoofing” where they are stealing live phone numbers of neighbors so that you (A) will answer the call and (B) can’t block it since it may be the number of a friend or relative of yours. I have even had my mother’s number spoofed from some company trying to get me to lower my interest rates on my credit cards to 0%.

In one of the videos FCC Chairman, Ajit Pai, indicates the largest fine ever imposed by the FCC was a fine against a Florida Company selling fraudulent vacations across the country. It appears that the company (and he does not provide a name) was fined \$120,000,000. Then he goes on to state that this company placed more than 96,000,000 calls in the three months prior to the fine. After writing this in my blog post I asked my readers to do the math. Here is how it could work out and I cannot prove any of this, though it is very possible.

Assume that out of 96,000,000 calls 5% of the called people answer the phone and listen to the sales pitch. That would be 4,800,000 people. Let's go on to assume that only 1/2 of these people fall victim to the scam and invest \$500 (and I have no idea what they were looking for ... I'm trying to low-ball it). That means the company collected $\$500 \times 2,400,000 = \$1,200,000,000$ (yea \$1.2 Billion). So, if they were fined \$120,000,000 ... they still made out with \$1,080,000,000 (\$1.08 Billion). Not a bad pay day even after the fine. That is a 900% Return on Investment if the company looks at the fine as an investment or cost of doing business. And, again, how much was returned to the consumers. No mention of this in the video.

I also learned in this video that Dish Networks was fined \$280,000,000 for breaking the law ... and they are allowed to stay in business and keep \$1.5 Billion in cash as well as all their other assets. What's up with that? If they broke the law ... aren't they criminals that should be punished to the full extent of the law? If they are being punished to the full extent of the law ... then perhaps the law needs to be made stronger.

Now in the video they talk about how telecommunications companies are also trying to fight this rampant problem. I personally am finding that hard to believe. If you look at the big one, AT&T, you can see that their cash position has changed dramatically over just the past few years (see below):

		Annual		Quarterly	
Balance Sheet		<small>All numbers in thousands</small>			
Period Ending	12/31/2017	12/31/2016	12/31/2015	12/31/2014	
Current Assets					
Cash And Cash Equivalents	50,498,000	5,788,000	5,121,000	8,603,000	

It appears here that since 2015 their cash and cash equivalents have grown by close to \$45 Billion. Now some of this could be from normal business operations or selling of some companies ... but when you look at how their net revenue has exploded – one has to wonder how much of this is coming from the increases in robo and spoofed calls (since after all these callers also have to pay a phone bill): 2014 Net Revenue = \$6.442 Billion ... 2017 Net Revenue = \$29.450 Billion. If the perpetrators of these calls are paying phone bills to American Phone Companies ... why would the American Phone Companies want to put any money toward stopping it?

In the 2.5-hour video I listened to, they claim that \$9.5 Billion (through 2017) had been lost by American Consumers. They also mentioned that \$400 Million had been charged in fines. However, that is only 4.2% of the total losses and not nearly enough to provide any money back to the consumers that lost money.

Mr. President, not enough is being done to defend against this problem. In my blog I mention that while “Defense” may win a football game at the super bowl ... only “Offense” will win against cybercrime that is being levied against the American Consumer such as this.

) Laws need to be improved and enforced.

-) Computer programs must be developed to guard against this crime.
-) Companies caught perpetrating the crime must be shut down and all assets turned over to the government and used to make the victims whole.
-) Perpetrators must be sent to jail (not white-collar country club jail) and a good job for them would be to work on America's highways and infrastructure needs while they serve their time.
-) American Phone Companies must be fined heavily for allowing such nonsense to continue in the name of "Almighty Profits" to the company and shareholders.

I believe America could solve this problem, if America wanted to solve this problem. More than simply not answering the phone, or blocking the number, must be done now that the criminals have learned to spoof neighbors phone numbers. You can go on-line and down load a number of programs that allows anyone to spoof a phone number. Most of these programs are free. Yet there is very little out there in the way of uncovering the real number calling – unless one is willing to pay the phone company for this additional service.

Yes sir, I understand that most of these calls come from off-shore, which is why you need to consider other measures against those countries that are allowing it to happen. And, yes, I realize it is not going to be an easy fix ... but I believe it can be fixed if you would get the American Government behind it.

Thanks for reading this letter!

With my Greatest Respect,

Jerry D Nix
American Citizen and Vietnam Veteran