



OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF ILLINOIS

Lisa Madigan
ATTORNEY GENERAL

August 26, 2013

Mr. Paul La Schiazza
President
AT & T Illinois
225 W. Randolph Street, Suite 27A
Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Mr. La Schiazza:

I am writing to ask what your company is doing about the ongoing problem of robocalls for Illinois residents. Telephone users in Illinois, as well as telephone users across the country, too often face an onslaught of computer-generated calls on their phones. They receive these calls, even though they have placed their numbers on the Federal Trade Commission's "Do Not Call" list, because the calls frequently originate from scammers who are not concerned about violating U.S. law. They use technology to hide their location and identity and are often located in foreign countries, making enforcement efforts against them difficult.

Robocalls disrupt consumers' privacy and they can cause significant financial harm, as many robocalls are selling fraudulent goods and services. Because robocalls are a significant consumer protection problem, your company, as well as other wireless and landline carriers, should be doing everything they can to protect customers from them. Given the nature of the problem, it will be impossible to put an end to robocalls through law enforcement efforts alone.

Despite coordinated actions by my office, other state attorneys general across the country, and the Federal Trade Commission, robocalls remain a growing problem. For example, during a three-month period in 2012, the FTC received an average of 200,000 complaints per month about robocalls.¹ This figure marked a more than two hundred percent increase from the same time period only three years earlier.² In Illinois, my office recently issued a consumer alert to make

¹ Federal Trade Commission, National Do Not Call Registry Data Book, FY 2012 (Oct. 2012), *available* at www.ftc.gov/os/2012/10/1210dnc-databook.pdf

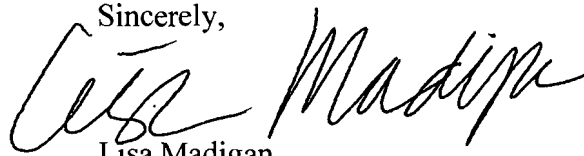
² Federal Trade Commission, National Do Not Call Registry Data Book, FY 2010 (Nov. 2010), *available* at www.ftc.gov/os/2010/12/101206dncdatabook.pdf

residents aware of robocalls for a medical alert service scam targeting senior citizens.³ These calls ask recipients to provide their personal financial information for services they never ordered. Because the potential financial harm to consumers from calls like these is real, landline and wireless companies should be exploring methods to decrease the number of them that reach telephone users.

While I understand there is no technological “silver bullet” available to solve this problem, it does appear that technological solutions, which could have an impact, are available. For example, in April, the FTC announced the winners of its “Robocall Challenge,” a contest it designed to encourage innovators to create solutions for blocking illegal robocalls. The winners of the contest all created viable proposals.⁴ Additionally, on July 11, a Committee in the U.S. Senate heard testimony from witnesses who have developed possible solutions to address robocalls.

I would like to know what solutions your company is exploring to address this problem. Please contact Erik Jones, my office’s Policy Director, at (312) 814-3873 to discuss what efforts, if any, your company has undertaken.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Madigan". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue horizontal line.

Lisa Madigan
Illinois Attorney General

Cc: Ms. Eileen Mitchell
Vice President, External Affairs

³ Office of the Illinois Attorney General, *Madigan Warns Residents about Medical Alert Service Scam: Complaints to Attorney General’s Office Report Unsolicited Calls Seeking Individuals’ Financial Information* (June 6, 2013).

⁴ Federal Trade Commission, *FTC Announces Robocall Challenge Winners: Proposals Would Use Call Filter Software to Reduce Illegal Calls* (Apr. 2, 2013).