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## AG MADIGAN CALLS ON PHONE CARRIERS TO OFFER CALL-BLOCKING TECHNOLOGY TO CUSTOMERS

**Chicago** — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today called on five major phone companies to offer call-blocking technology to their customers. In a joint letter to the chief executives of the carriers, Madigan and 43 other state attorneys general highlighted a new Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rule clarification that allows the phone companies to offer customers the ability to block unwanted calls. The clarification also verifies that federal law does not prohibit offering the services.

In the letter to AT&T, Sprint, Verizon, T-Mobile and CenturyLink, the attorneys general stated, "Every year, our offices are flooded with consumer complaints pleading for a solution to stop intrusive robocalls. Your companies are now poised to offer your customers the help they need. We urge you to act without delay."

Despite coordinated efforts by Madigan's office, other state attorneys general and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), Illinois residents continue to report robocalls to their homes, even when residents have placed their numbers on the FTC's "Do Not Call" registry. The calls frequently originate from scammers in foreign countries, using technology to hide their location and identity, which makes enforcement efforts against them difficult.

In response to this problem, phone carriers had previously claimed they could not offer call-blocking services. At a July 2013 hearing before a Senate subcommittee, representatives from the US Telecom Association and the Cellular Telephone Industries Association (CTIA) testified that "legal barriers prevent carriers from implementing advanced call-blocking technology to reduce the number of unwanted telemarketing calls."

"The FCC has now made it clear that phone companies can help consumers avoid these unwanted, annoying, and sometimes expensive calls," Madigan said. "We will continue to press these phone carriers to give their customers what they have been asking for – a way to stop these calls before they ever come through."

Madigan said call-blocking options already exist for Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone service (NoMoRobo.com) and Android cell phones (Call Control), and the phone carriers should move quickly to implement and inform their consumers of these options.

Last September, Madigan and 38 attorneys general called on the FCC to allow phone companies to utilize call-blocking technologies. The FCC chairman endorsed the request in late May, and the FCC voted to pass the rule clarification on June 18.

Joining Madigan in signing today's letter are the attorneys general of Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming and the District of Columbia.

The letter is Madigan's latest step to address the growing problem of robocalls targeting Illinois residents. Previously, the Attorney General called on four leading U.S. phone carriers to implement call-blocking technology. And in 2011, she led an effort to defeat federal legislation that would allow phone carriers to place automated robocalls on cell phones and force customers to pay for the unwanted calls.

Madigan encouraged Illinois residents to better protect themselves from unwanted calls by signing up for the FTC's Do Not Call registry. To register, visit <https://donotcall.gov/register/reg.aspx> or call 1-888-382-1222 (TTY: 1-866-290-4236).

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