STATEMENT OF CHAIRWOMAN JESSICA ROSENWORCEL

Re: *Call Authentication Trust Anchor*, Eighth Report and Order, WC Docket No. 17-97 (November 21, 2024).

The scammers behind illegal robocalls are relentless. Whenever we close a loophole they use to send unwanted calls, they look for new ways to flood our networks with this junk. That means the Federal Communications Commission needs to be just as tireless in its efforts to identify these loopholes and stop bad actors from exploiting them. That is true today, tomorrow, and in the future, too.

Here, we take steps to close a loophole that involves STIR/SHAKEN. STIR/SHAKEN is a technology that three years ago we required carriers to use when they originate and terminate calls. It provides call authentication information that helps prove that a caller is really who they say they are and not a scammer using the network for fraud. This is why on your phone today you can see when an incoming call is identified as a "spam risk." That's the network using this technology and letting you know that answering is not worth your time. We did that.

Right now, most carriers deploy STIR/SHAKEN technology on their own. Others use third party solutions. Working with a third party can make sense for some carriers because it can keep costs down and help keep junk off the line. But it can also allow carriers to turn the other way and make the mess of unwanted calls someone else's responsibility. That's not right.

We shut down this loophole today. In this order, we describe when and how carriers can use third-party solutions to put in place STIR/SHAKEN technology on their networks. In other words, we set the ground rules for how to use a third party for call authentication and make clear that carriers bear ultimate responsibility for compliance. To facilitate this, we make sure that providers that have filed in our Robocall Mitigation Database get a token and digital certification so that other providers in the call path can trust who they say they are. This means you can use a third party to assist with STIR/SHAKEN obligations, but you can't use this arrangement to look the other way and pass the buck if problems come up.

Closing this loophole matters because every little change helps. But to really stop the flood of illegal robocalls we need some bigger changes. We need Congress to fix the gaping loophole left by the Supreme Court in its decision narrowing the definition of autodialer under the Telephone Consumer Protection Act that substantially reduces our ability to protect consumers from junk robocalls and robotexts. We also need to make sure that when this agency issues big fines for illegal robocalls we can take the bad actors responsible to court and not just rely on the Department of Justice to do so. When coupled with the work of the Industry Traceback Group and the 49 State Attorneys General I now have partnering with this agency to help stop robocalls, these changes would make a real difference.

Back to the here and now. A big thank you to the Robocall Response Team and staff responsible for this order, including Erik Beith, Emily Caditz, Callie Coker, Liz Drogula, Trent Harkrader, Jodie May, Jonathan Lechter, Sue McNeil, Zachary Ross, and Mason Shefa from the Wireline Competition Bureau; Maureen Bizhko, Ken Carlberg, and Deb Jordan from the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau; Jerusha Burnett, Aaron Garza, Wes Platt, Alejandro Roark, and Kristi Thornton from the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau; Loyaan Egal, Alexander Hobbs, Rakesh Patel, Daniel Stepanicich, Kristi Thompson, and Jane van Benten from the Enforcement Bureau; Malena Barzilai, Michelle Ellison, Wade Lindsay, Richard Mallen, Erika Olsen, Joel Rabinovitz, Elliot Tarloff, Derek Yeo, and Chin Yoo from the Office of General Counsel; Chelsea Fallon, Stacy Jordan, Eugene Kiselev, and Giulia McHenry from the Office of Economics and Analytics; and Joycelyn James, Michael Gussow, Jeffrey Tignor, and Chana Wilkerson from the Office of Communications Business Opportunities.