



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Weekly Column #6: We've had enough of telemarketers invading your privacy

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO March 8, 2016

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When the government creates a law, people expect the law to do what it's supposed to do. But that's not the case with the National Do Not Call Registry.

The federal government created this database in 2003 as a way to stop people from being pestered by relentless telemarketers. The law has helped reduce the number of unwanted solicitations, yet many people who have listed their phone numbers on the Do Not Call Registry continue to receive telemarketing calls at all hours of the day.

Understandably, these people are fed up and annoyed. They put their name on the Do Not Call Registry for a reason, but the calls don't stop. This can only fuel their lack of confidence in the government's ability to get things done.

While the federal government should strive to find ways to fix any flaws in the Do Not Call Registry, I have sponsored legislation as chairman of the Senate Telecommunications and Energy Committee that I believe will better discourage telemarketers from violating this law in New York State.

Businesses can already be fined up to \$11,000 for every call that violates the Do Not Call Registry – that can add up to a lot of money very quickly. Still, some businesses believe the money they can make by violating the registry law is greater than what they may lose by paying fines.

My answer? Hit 'em harder, by nearly doubling the fines to \$20,000 for each violation.

Every business has a bottom-line, so the more costly you can make it for telemarketers who violate the Do Not Call Registry, the more likely they may be to think twice about bothering you.

Some telemarketers may be counting on the likelihood that you'll simply hang up and not file a complaint. Don't give them the upper hand: Write down their business name, the time they called and look for their number on your caller ID.

Then, and this is very important: **Report them to the Do Not Call Registry at 1-888-382-1222, or online at www.donotcall.gov.** That's the only way the process can begin in order to hold telemarketers accountable for breaking the law.

There are, however, a few exceptions to the Do Not Call Registry: charities, political organizations, surveys and bill collectors are allowed to call you.

The Do Not Call Registry will never be perfect, as unscrupulous telemarketers continue to look for ways to stay one step ahead of the law. In fact, a new technique called "spoofing" enables a telemarketer to disguise their number so your Caller ID makes it seem like the call is coming from someone legitimate, like a bank, an insurance company, the government, or simply someone local.

These invasions of your privacy should not be tolerated, and I will continue to do everything in my power to stop shameless telemarketers from bothering people who simply want to be left alone.

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RELATED LEGISLATION

2015-S6553

- Introduced
 - ◦ In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
 - ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
 - ◦ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
 - Delivered to Governor
 - Signed By Governor
 -

Raises the maximum fine for persons who violate the law regulating telemarketing to twenty thousand dollars

January 26, 2016

In Senate Committee Rules

Sponsored by Joseph A. Griffo

Do you support this bill?