

# Senate Passes Durbin Legislation to Help Combat Robocalls

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WASHINGTON – Today, the Senate passed the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence Act, known as the TRACED Act. The legislation, of which U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) cosponsored, would address the scourge of robocalls by increasing fines on violators of the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) and directing phone service providers to implement call authentication technology, which can reasonably predict whether an inbound call is from a spoofed number.

“This is a positive step in the fight to end illegal robocalls. The Senate must build on the reforms in the TRACED Act by empowering Americans to hold these illegal callers accountable. It’s time to put an end to the nuisance of robocalls and the predatory schemes they perpetuate,” Durbin said.

Americans received a record 48 billion robocalls in 2018. In April 2019, YouMail estimated that Illinois residents received more than 176 million robocalls, which equates to more than 68 robocalls per second. Despite repeated legislative efforts, regulatory enforcement actions, and the proliferation of call-blocking mobile applications, the scourge of robocalls continues to plague everyday Americans at alarming rates.

Robocalls are also costing consumers billions of dollars. In 2016, 22 million Americans lost more than \$9.5 billion to robocall scams that mainly target the most vulnerable in society, like senior citizens, immigrants, and people living with disabilities.

In April, Durbin, along with Senators Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Ed Markey (D-MA), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Tina Smith (D-MN), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), and Ben Cardin (D-MD), introduced the Protecting American Consumers from Robocalls Act, another bill that would help end the plague of illegal robocalls in America. The bill would enhance the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) of 1991 and the Do-Not-Call Registry by giving landline and cellular consumers alike the ability to petition for statutory damages for all unconsented-to telemarketing calls immediately after the first violation of the TCPA. The bill is supported by the National Consumer Law Center, Consumer Action, and the Consumer Federation of America.