



Statement by CASRO and MRA Regarding the FCC's June 18 TCPA Vote

Washington, DC, June 19, 2015 — Yesterday, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) approved new regulations that expand the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) and unnecessarily increase consumer and business costs.

The new FCC rules broaden restrictions on autodialed calls to cell phones without differentiation for caller intent. This ignores the TCPA's original purpose to curtail telemarketing calls, makes research less accurate, increases costs and invites more class action lawsuits against researchers.

Additionally, "We had asked that the FCC limit use of the term "robocall," sensibly limit the definition of an autodialer, and establish a bright line rule regarding reasonable opt-out and a clear standard for notice of wireless number reassignment," said CASRO President Diane Bowers. "CASRO and MRA are disappointed that these requests were sidestepped."

The 1991 TCPA requires express prior consent to call a cell phone using an autodialer. In 2014, approximately 78 million U.S. households (58.8 percent) were mostly or only reachable via cell phone, the calling of which is restricted for any purpose including research by the FCC's implementation of the law.

"The TCPA was enacted at a time when hardly anyone had a cell phone," said MRA CEO David Almy. "Now, with our nation sporting more mobile devices than people, the TCPA regulatory environment really should be modernized."

Both associations urged the FCC to refocus on measures that would protect consumers from harm by expanding the agency's enforcement to deter and punish illegal and abusive telemarketers, as Congress originally intended, instead of harming legitimate research businesses.

Once the full ruling is made public, CASRO and MRA will be providing a detailed analysis of the new rules to their members, and considering all options — regulatory, legislative and judicial — to support a positive business environment for legitimate research.

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CASRO and MRA are the national trade associations for the survey, opinion and marketing research industry – CASRO represents U.S. research businesses and MRA represents U.S. research professionals.