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April 19, 2019

The Honorable John Thune
United States Senate
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
United States Senate
255 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Thune and Markey:

On behalf of our nearly 38 million members and all older Americans nationwide, AARP is pleased to endorse the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence Act (TRACED Act), which addresses the fraudulent activities that sometimes take place through robocalls. This Act will expand the powers of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to levy civil penalties against robocallers, require service providers to adopt the current state-of-the-art call authentication technology, and promote interagency cooperation to address the robocall problem.

AARP believes that the TRACED Act will pave the way for relief from unwanted robocalls, which frequently are associated with fraudulent activities. The TRACED Act mandates the adoption of “STIR/SHAKEN” call authentication, which has the potential to block robocallers and other telephone spammers. The expanded authority granted to the FCC to levy civil penalties of up to \$10,000 per call should also act as a deterrent to the robocalling problem. All of these measures have the potential to generate substantial benefits for consumers.

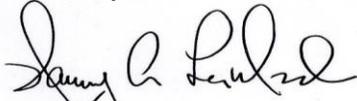
While AARP is strongly supportive of the robocall blocking that will result from the STIR/SHAKEN authentication technology, AARP is concerned that unintentional blocking of innocent callers may result from the new technology. When discussing the ability of consumers to apply existing blocking solutions, the final Robocall Strike Force Report noted that, “solutions will always have some level of false positives.”¹ In any call authentication framework, a false positive would arise when a caller who is not a robocaller has their number blocked due to an error—resulting in the inability to make calls. The TRACED Act acknowledges this potential by instructing the FCC to establish “a process to permit a calling party adversely affected by the information provided by the call authentication framework . . . to verify the authenticity of the calling party’s

¹ Robocall Strike Force Report, October 26, 2016, p. 16.

calls.” This instruction is appropriate and the FCC should complete the rulemaking within 18 months (the same timeframe as the full implementation of the STIR/SHAKEN authentication process).

AARP has a long history of fighting for protections for older Americans through our Fraud Watch Network, which is a nationwide program focused on empowering consumers to protect themselves, their family and their communities from fraud and scams. AARP is encouraged by the TRACED Act, which has the potential to eliminate illegal robocalls. All Americans will benefit from the provisions of the Act that promote an accurate call authentication framework. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues on a bipartisan basis to combat unwanted and abusive robocalls against older Americans. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, or have your staff contact Dawit Kahsai on our Government Affairs staff at (202) 434-3761.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy A. LeaMond". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Nancy A. LeaMond
Executive Vice President and
Chief Advocacy & Engagement Officer