

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 1278  
Economic Matters

(Delegate Shetty, *et al.*)

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Voice Over Internet Protocol - Robocalls - Customer Information

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This bill requires a voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) service provider that is located in the State to obtain specified information from a person making robocalls through the VoIP service provider. A person who willfully violates the bill's requirement is subject to a civil penalty of up to \$500 for each robocall made.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** Potential minimal increase in general fund revenues due to the bill's penalty provisions. Enforcement can be handled with existing resources.

**Local Effect:** The bill is not anticipated to materially affect local government finances or operations.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

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Analysis

**Bill Summary:** "Robocall" means a call made (including a text message sent) to any telephone number owned by a person in the State using (1) an automatic dialer or (2) an artificial or prerecorded voice.

An "automatic dialer" means equipment or software that makes a series of calls to stored telephone numbers, including numbers stored on a list.

**Current Law/Background:** "VoIP" is defined as any two-way voice communications that originate from (or terminate to) the subscriber end user's location requiring

Internet protocol (or any successor protocol to Internet protocol) and requires a broadband connection from the user's location. "VoIP service" includes any such service that permits users generally to receive calls that originate on the public switched telephone network and to terminate calls to the public switched telephone network.

According to the [Federal Communications Commission](#), VoIP is a technology that allows an individual to make voice calls using a broadband Internet connection instead of a regular (or analog) phone line. Some VoIP services may only allow a person to call other people using the same service but others may allow a person to call anyone who has a telephone number (including local, long distance, mobile, and international numbers). Also, while some VoIP services only work over a computer or a special VoIP phone, other services allow a person to use a traditional phone connected to a VoIP adapter.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Office of the Attorney General (Consumer Protection Division); Federal Communications Commission; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 10, 2020  
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Analysis by: Eric F. Pierce

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510