



Testimony to the Senate Finance Committee
SB 90 Commercial Law-Consumer Protection-Telephone Solicitation
Position: Favorable

February 1, 2023

The Honorable Melony Griffith, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Third Floor, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
cc: Members, Senate Finance

Honorable Chair Griffith and Members of the Committee:

Economic Action Maryland (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) is a people-centered movement to expand economic rights, housing justice, and community reinvestment for working families, low-income communities, and communities of color. Economic Action Maryland provides direct assistance today while passing legislation and regulations to create systemic change in the future.

We are writing today in support of SB 90.

Spam calls and calls that conceal the identity of the caller are on the rise. A report found that [123.8 million](#) spam calls were made to Maryland residents in one month, January 2019, an average of almost 15 calls per person for every resident of the state.

In 2021, Marylanders received more than a billion robocalls (see Robocalls in Maryland graph), about [424 million](#) (42%) of which were scam robocalls—or about 7 scam robocalls for each Marylander per month. The majority of these calls were scam calls designed to bilk Maryland residents of their hard-earned money.

Although there are some federal regulations related to spam calls and robocalls, they have been largely ineffective. The federal regulations provide a floor and SB 90 creates stronger state guardrails for Maryland residents by requiring affirmative consent to receive these calls. Telephone solicitors who violate SB 90 are in violation of the Maryland Consumer Protection Act and subject to its penalties and enforcement.

While SB 90 expands consumer protection and allows Maryland residents to limit these spam calls, it exempts legitimate businesses and nonprofits from the legislation.

2209 Maryland Ave · Baltimore, MD · 21218 · 410-220-0494

info@econaction.org · www.econaction.org · Tax

ID 52-2266235

In our work with older adults and other consumers, we hear story after story of how an individual lost money after falling prey to a telemarketing scam. It is critical that we rein in these robocalls and spam calls and create stronger protections for our residents.

For all these reasons, we support SB 90 and urge a favorable report.

Best,

Marceline White
Executive Director

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