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January 10, 2024

**VIA ECFS**

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
45 L Street NE  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: *Targeting and Eliminating Unlawful Text Messages*, CG Docket No. 21-402; *Rules and Regulations Implementing the Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991*, CG Docket No. 02-278; *Advanced Methods to Target and Eliminate Unlawful Robocalls*, CG Docket No. 17-59

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On January 8, 2024, on behalf of the Voice on the Net (“VON”) Coalition, the individuals identified below met with the following representatives of the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau: Mark Stone, Deputy Chief; Aaron Garza, Legal Advisor; Wesley Platt, Chief, Consumer Policy Division; Kristi Thornton, Deputy Chief, Consumer Policy Division; and Jerusha Burnett, Attorney Advisor. We discussed the VON Coalition members’ experiences providing text messaging services to their unified communications customers, as well as some of the challenges in the current environment.

The VON Coalition supports vigorous safeguards against unlawful text messages and any kind of fraud perpetrated using SMS. Its members proactively work to prevent and detect any such activity and support the Commission’s mission to protect consumers from bad actors. We agree with the Commission that “[j]ust like unwanted and illegal calls, unwanted and illegal texts defraud and harass consumers,” and strong protections are needed to prevent these outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Targeting and Eliminating Unlawful Text Messages; Rules and Regulations Implementing the Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991; Advanced Methods to Target and Eliminate Unlawful Robocalls*, Second Report & Order, Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in CG Docket Nos. 02-278 and 21-402, and Waiver Order in CG Docket No. 17-59, FCC No. 23-107, CG Docket Nos. 21-402, 02-278, and 17-59, ¶ 5 (rel. Dec. 18, 2023).

As providers of texting services who are not themselves mobile wireless providers, the VON Coalition members described some of the challenges they face in the current environment. The members participate in The Campaign Registry (“TCR”), which states that it is the “central hub” for registering any “Application-to-Person,” or “A2P,” text campaigns and vetting them before texts can be terminated to a participating mobile wireless provider.<sup>2</sup> Under this system, a customer of one of the VON Coalition members must be registered with TCR, and then register a text “campaign.” Once its registration and campaign are approved (and all necessary fees paid), the customer should then be able to send texts as described. Notably, the mobile wireless providers’ customers are not subject to these safeguards, and thus are not required to register, be vetted, or pay associated fees, nor are they subject to the content review of texts sent under these campaigns.

Even after a customer navigates this burdensome and expensive process, it may nevertheless see legitimate and compliant texts rejected or blocked. While VON supports blocking in appropriate circumstances, its customers have experienced frequent blocking of wanted communications without explanation or an opportunity for effective redress. Blocked text messages may result in patients not receiving their medical appointment reminders or telehealth log-in information, workers not receiving their daily assignment locations, and athletes missing out on sporting events in which they intended to participate, among many other unfortunate scenarios. These problems harm our customers—which are often smaller businesses—as well as their patients, employees, and users.

We look forward to engaging with the Commission to find solutions to unlawful texts that protect consumers while allowing legitimate communications to flow.

Sincerely,



Julie A. Veach

*Counsel to the VON Coalition*

cc: Mark Stone  
Aaron Garza  
Wesley Platt  
Kristi Thornton  
Jerusha Burnett

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<sup>2</sup> CAMPAIGN REGISTRY, <https://www.campaignregistry.com/> (listing the participating mobile wireless providers); *About The Campaign Registry*, CAMPAIGN REGISTRY, <https://www.campaignregistry.com/what-is-campaign-registry/>.

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