

SUBCHAPTER V—GENERAL PROVISIONS

§§ 5651 to 5658. Repealed. Pub. L. 111-314, § 6, Dec. 18, 2010, 124 Stat. 3444

Section 5651, Pub. L. 102-555, title V, § 501, Oct. 28, 1992, 106 Stat. 4176, related to nondiscriminatory data availability. See section 60141 of Title 51, National and Commercial Space Programs.

Section 5652, Pub. L. 102-555, title V, § 502, Oct. 28, 1992, 106 Stat. 4176, related to archiving of data. See section 60142 of Title 51.

Section 5653, Pub. L. 102-555, title V, § 503, Oct. 28, 1992, 106 Stat. 4177, related to nonreproduction of unenhanced data. See section 60143 of Title 51.

Section 5654, Pub. L. 102-555, title V, § 504, Oct. 28, 1992, 106 Stat. 4177, related to reimbursement for assistance. See section 60144 of Title 51.

Section 5655, Pub. L. 102-555, title V, § 505, Oct. 28, 1992, 106 Stat. 4177, related to acquisition of equipment. See section 60145 of Title 51.

Section 5656, Pub. L. 102-555, title V, § 506, Oct. 28, 1992, 106 Stat. 4177, related to radio frequency allocation. See section 60146 of Title 51.

Section 5657, Pub. L. 102-555, title V, § 507, Oct. 28, 1992, 106 Stat. 4178, related to consultation regarding national security, international obligations, status reports, and certain reimbursements. See section 60147 of Title 51.

Section 5658, Pub. L. 102-555, title V, § 508, Oct. 28, 1992, 106 Stat. 4179, related to enforcement of prohibition of data use for commercial purposes. See section 60148 of Title 51.

SUBCHAPTER VI—PROHIBITION OF COMMERCIALIZATION OF WEATHER SATELLITES

§§ 5671, 5672. Repealed. Pub. L. 111-314, § 6, Dec. 18, 2010, 124 Stat. 3444

Section 5671, Pub. L. 102-555, title VI, § 601, Oct. 28, 1992, 106 Stat. 4179, prohibited commercialization of weather satellite systems. See section 60161 of Title 51, National and Commercial Space Programs.

Section 5672, Pub. L. 102-555, title VI, § 602, Oct. 28, 1992, 106 Stat. 4180, related to future considerations. See section 60162 of Title 51.

CHAPTER 83—TELEPHONE DISCLOSURE AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Sec.

5701. Short title; findings.

SUBCHAPTER I—REGULATION OF UNFAIR AND DECEPTIVE ACTS AND PRACTICES IN CONNECTION WITH PAY-PER-CALL SERVICES

5711. Federal Trade Commission regulations.

5712. Actions by States.

5713. Administration and applicability of subchapter.

5714. Definitions.

SUBCHAPTER II—BILLING AND COLLECTION

5721. Regulations.

5722. Relation to State laws.

5723. Enforcement.

5724. Definitions.

§ 5701. Short title; findings

(a) Short title

This chapter may be cited as the “Telephone Disclosure and Dispute Resolution Act”.

(b) Findings

The Congress finds the following:

(1) The use of pay-per-call services, most commonly through the use of 900 telephone

numbers, has grown exponentially in the past few years into a national, billion-dollar industry as a result of recent technological innovations. Such services are convenient to consumers, cost-effective to vendors, and profitable to communications common carriers.

(2) Many pay-per-call businesses provide valuable information, increase consumer choices, and stimulate innovative and responsive services that benefit the public.

(3) The interstate nature of the pay-per-call industry means that its activities are beyond the reach of individual States and therefore requires Federal regulatory treatment to protect the public interest.

(4) The lack of nationally uniform regulatory guidelines has led to confusion for callers, subscribers, industry participants, and regulatory agencies as to the rights of callers and the oversight responsibilities of regulatory authorities, and has allowed some pay-per-call businesses to engage in practices that abuse the rights of consumers.

(5) Some interstate pay-per-call businesses have engaged in practices which are misleading to the consumer, harmful to the public interest, or contrary to accepted standards of business practices and thus cause harm to the many reputable businesses that are serving the public.

(6) Because the consumer most often incurs a financial obligation as soon as a pay-per-call transaction is completed, the accuracy and descriptiveness of vendor advertisements become crucial in avoiding consumer abuse. The obligation for accuracy should include price-per-call and duration-of-call information, odds disclosure for lotteries, games, and sweepstakes, and obligations for obtaining parental consent from callers under 18.

(7) The continued growth of the legitimate pay-per-call industry is dependent upon consumer confidence that unfair and deceptive behavior will be effectively curtailed and that consumers will have adequate rights of redress.

(8) Vendors of telephone-billed goods and services must also feel confident in their rights and obligations for resolving billing disputes if they are to use this new marketplace for the sale of products of more than nominal value.

(Pub. L. 102-556, § 1, Oct. 28, 1992, 106 Stat. 4181.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

This chapter, referred to in subsec. (a), was in the original “this Act”, meaning Pub. L. 102-556, Oct. 28, 1992, 106 Stat. 4181, which enacted this chapter and section 228 of Title 47, Telecommunications, amended sections 227 and 302a of Title 47, enacted provisions set out as a note under section 302a of Title 47, and amended provisions set out as a note under section 227 of Title 47. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Tables.

SUBCHAPTER I—REGULATION OF UNFAIR
AND DECEPTIVE ACTS AND PRACTICES
IN CONNECTION WITH PAY-PER-CALL
SERVICES

§ 5711. Federal Trade Commission regulations

(a) In general

(1) Advertising regulations

The Commission shall prescribe rules in accordance with this subsection to prohibit unfair and deceptive acts and practices in any advertisement for pay-per-call services. Such rules shall require that the person offering such pay-per-call services—

(A) clearly and conspicuously disclose in any advertising the cost of the use of such telephone number, including the total cost or the cost per minute and any other fees for that service and for any other pay-per-call service to which the caller may be transferred;

(B) in the case of an advertisement which offers a prize or award or a service or product at no cost or for a reduced cost, clearly and conspicuously disclose the odds of being able to receive such prize, award, service, or product at no cost or reduced cost, or, if such odds are not calculable in advance, disclose the factors determining such odds;

(C) in the case of an advertisement that promotes a service that is not operated or expressly authorized by a Federal agency but that provides information on a Federal program, include at the beginning of such advertisement a clear disclosure that the service is not authorized, endorsed, or approved by any Federal agency;

(D) shall not direct such advertisement at children under the age of 12, unless such service is a bona fide educational service;

(E) in the case of advertising directed primarily to individuals under the age of 18, clearly and conspicuously state in such advertising that such individual must have the consent of such individual's parent or legal guardian for the use of such services;

(F) be prohibited from using advertisements that emit electronic tones which can automatically dial a pay-per-call telephone number;

(G) ensure that, whenever the number to be called is shown in television and print media advertisements, the charges for the call are clear and conspicuous and (when shown in television advertisements) displayed for the same duration as that number is displayed;

(H) in delivering any telephone message soliciting calls to a pay-per-call service, specify clearly, and at no less than the audible volume of the solicitation, the total cost and the cost per minute and any other fees for that service and for any other pay-per-call service to which the caller may be transferred; and

(I) not advertise an 800 telephone number, or any other telephone number advertised or widely understood to be toll free, from which callers are connected to an access number for a pay-per-call service.

(2) Pay-per-call service standards

The Commission shall prescribe rules to require that each provider of pay-per-call services—

(A) include in each pay-per-call message an introductory disclosure message that—

(i) describes the service being provided;

(ii) specifies clearly and at a reasonably understandable volume the total cost or the cost per minute and any other fees for that service and for any other pay-per-call service to which the caller may be transferred;

(iii) informs the caller that charges for the call begin at the end of the introductory message;

(iv) informs the caller that parental consent is required for calls made by children; and

(v) in the case of a pay-per-call service that is not operated or expressly authorized by a Federal agency but that provides information on any Federal program, a statement that clearly states that the service is not authorized, endorsed, or approved by any Federal agency;

(B) enable the caller to hang up at or before the end of the introductory message without incurring any charge whatsoever;

(C) not direct such services at children under the age of 12, unless such service is a bona fide educational service;

(D) stop the assessment of time-based charges immediately upon disconnection by the caller;

(E) disable any bypass mechanism which allows frequent callers to avoid listening to the disclosure message described in subparagraph (A) after the institution of any price increase and for a period of time sufficient to give such frequent callers adequate and sufficient notice of the price change;

(F) be prohibited from providing pay-per-call services through an 800 number or other telephone number advertised or widely understood to be toll free;

(G) be prohibited from billing consumers in excess of the amounts described in the introductory message and from billing for services provided in violation of the rules prescribed by the Commission pursuant to this section;

(H) ensure that any billing statement for such provider's charges shall—

(i) display any charges for pay-per-call services in a part of the consumer's bill that is identified as not being related to local and long distance telephone charges; and

(ii) for each charge so displayed, specify, at a minimum, the type of service, the amount of the charge, and the date, time, and duration of the call;

(I) be liable for refunds to consumers who have been billed for pay-per-call services pursuant to programs that have been found to have violated the regulations prescribed pursuant to this section or subchapter II of this chapter or any other Federal law; and

(J) comply with such additional standards as the Commission may prescribe to prevent abusive practices.