
Ty BODDEN

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 59TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony on Assembly Bill 559

Assembly Committee on Consumer Protection

Thursday, December 11, 2024

Thank you, Chairman Callahan and members of the Consumer Protection Committee for the opportunity to testify in favor of Assembly Bill 559. Thank you Senator Wanggaard and Representative Kitchens for leading on this legislation with me.

A similar version of this bill was brought forward during the 2019-2020 session. We have since incorporated the favorable amendments and recommendations made during testimony from the 2019-2020 version to refine the legislation. Assembly Bill 559 prohibits caller identification spoofing. Under this legislation, no person may knowingly transmit misleading or inaccurate caller ID information through a telephone call or text message with the intent to defraud or wrongfully obtain anything of value, including personally identifiable information. The legislation also prohibits telephone solicitors from knowingly transmitting misleading or inaccurate caller ID information for any purpose, however, the telephone solicitor is allowed to share the seller's name and customer service telephone number. This is permissible if an individual can call that number during regular business hours to make a do-not-call request.

More than simply being a nuisance, these calls are often used in furtherance of scams, fraud, and identity theft. In order to conceal or misrepresent their identity, telemarketers have increasingly relied on manipulations to their caller ID listings through blocking caller ID from displaying their number or engaging in a practice known as "spoofing," through which the caller relies on technology to display an inaccurate number on caller ID.

We have received numerous requests from constituents, particularly focusing on the vulnerability of elderly citizens to such scams. Our seniors are often targeted due to their age, financial situation, and inherent trust. By passing this legislation, we reinforce accountability for those who prey on our citizens, especially the most vulnerable.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration of this bill.



Van H. Wanggaard

Wisconsin State Senator

January 11, 2024

Testimony on Assembly Bill 559

Good Morning. Thank you Chairman Callahan and committee members, for allowing me to testify on Assembly Bill 559 (AB 559) relating to caller ID spoofing, granting rule-making authority, and providing a penalty.

Citizens in Wisconsin are still experiencing too many telemarketing calls on a regular basis. Receiving these telemarketing calls is often irritating, as evidenced by unsolicited telemarketing having often been the number-one consumer complaint received annually by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). In fact, there were over 1,650 complaints registered in 2022 alone.

However, more than simply being a nuisance, these calls are now often used in furtherance of scams, fraud, and identity theft. In order to conceal or misrepresent their identity, telemarketers have increasingly relied on manipulation to their caller ID listings through blocking caller ID from displaying their phone number or engaging in a practice known as “spoofing” through which the caller relies on technology to display an inaccurate number on caller ID.

Simply put, caller ID spoofing enables fraud and other illegal activities that can cause significant personal and/or financial harm. Therefore, Rep. Bodden and I have introduced AB 559 in order to bring justice upon those who use ID spoofing in malicious or deceptive ways. *Wisconsin citizens deserve protection and transparency when using their telephones. AB 559 helps to make sure that happens.*

Specifically, under this the bill, no person may knowingly transmit misleading or inaccurate caller ID information through a telephone call or text message with the intent to defraud or wrongfully obtain anything of value, including personally identifiable information. Further, the bill prohibits telephone solicitors from knowingly transmitting misleading or inaccurate caller ID information for any purpose. Finally, this bill prohibits a telephone solicitor from blocking the transmission of caller ID information. And, finally, to add some “teeth” to this Bill, we added a provision whereby any person who violates any of these prohibitions is subject to a civil forfeiture of \$100 to \$10,000.

It’s worth repeating: Wisconsinites deserve protection and transparency when using their phones and AB 559 helps ensure that happens. Thank you.

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