

House Passes Caller ID Bill; Act Prevents Callers from Falsifying Caller Identification Information

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NEWS RELEASE

Committee on Energy and Commerce

Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman

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Washington, D.C. - Today the U.S. House of Representatives approved H.R. 251, also known as the "Truth in Caller ID Act of 2007," by a voice vote. The bill originated in the Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet.

"Con artists and scammers should not be allowed to misrepresent their identities in order to lure people to answer their phones, just as door-to-door salesmen should honestly represent themselves and their businesses," said Rep. John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce. "This bill will provide much needed regulation for all forms of telephone calls, be they cellular, landline or over the Internet."

H.R. 251, introduced by Rep. Eliot Engel (D-NY) and Rep. Joe Barton (R-TX), protects against caller ID "spoofing," whereby a caller falsifies his or her original identification information during the transmission of a phone call. Typically, caller ID spoofing will involve a caller altering the number that appears on someone's caller ID service when a call is placed. Spoofing has been a common practice for years, but has required expensive equipment. Now, with the growth of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), spoofing has become easier and less costly to execute. A number of Internet Web sites also offer spoofing services, as well as other tools, such as voice scrambling mechanisms.

The bill allows for the legitimate altering of Caller ID information, such as calls made from domestic abuse shelters, by addressing deceptive manipulations of Caller ID information.

The Senate must also pass the bill before it becomes law.

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Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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