

RCW 80.36.400 Automatic dialing and announcing device—

Commercial solicitation by. (1) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(a) (i) "Assist in the transmission" means actions taken to provide substantial assistance or support, which enables any person to formulate, originate, initiate, or transmit a commercial solicitation when the person providing the assistance knows or consciously avoids knowing that the initiator of the commercial solicitation is engaged, or intends to engage, in any practice that violates chapter 19.86 RCW, the consumer protection act.

(ii) "Assist in the transmission" does not include any of the following:

(A) Activities of an entity relating to the design, manufacture, or distribution of any technology, product, or component that has a commercially significant use other than to violate or circumvent this section;

(B) Activities of a telecommunications provider or other entity that are limited to providing access to the internet for purposes excluding initiation of a telephone communication; or

(C) Activities of a terminating provider relating to the transmission of a telephone communication.

(b) "Automatic dialing and announcing device" is a system which automatically dials telephone numbers and transmits a recorded or artificial voice message once a connection is made. A recorded or artificial message is transmitted even if the recorded or artificial message goes directly to a recipient's voicemail.

(c) "Commercial solicitation" means the unsolicited initiation of a telephone communication made for the purpose of encouraging a person to purchase property, goods, or services, or wrongfully obtaining anything of value.

(d) "Terminating provider" means a telecommunications provider that provides voice services to an end user customer.

(2) No person may use an automatic dialing and announcing device for purposes of commercial solicitation. This section applies to all commercial solicitation intended to be received by telephone customers within the state.

(3) No person may assist in the transmission of a commercial solicitation described in subsection (2) of this section. In any action arising out of a violation of this subsection, it shall be an affirmative defense that a telecommunications provider both:

(a) Acted in compliance with 47 U.S.C. Sec. 227, 16 C.F.R. Part 310, and related regulations; and

(b) Implemented a reasonably effective plan to mitigate origination, initiation, or transmission of a commercial solicitation described in subsection (2) of this section.

(4) The legislature finds that the practices covered by this section are matters vitally affecting the public interest for the purpose of applying the consumer protection act, chapter 19.86 RCW. A violation of this section is not reasonable in relation to the development and preservation of business and is an unfair or deceptive act in trade or commerce and an unfair method of competition for the purpose of applying the consumer protection act, chapter 19.86 RCW. In addition to all remedies available in chapter 19.86 RCW, a person who is injured under this section may bring a civil action in the superior

court to enjoin further violations and shall recover actual damages or \$1,000 per violation of this section, whichever is greater.

(5) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the Washington utilities and transportation commission from adopting additional rules regulating automatic dialing and announcing devices. [2023 c 103 § 2; 1986 c 281 § 2.]

Reviser's note: The definitions in subsection (1) of this section have been alphabetized pursuant to RCW 1.08.125(2)(k).

Findings—Intent—2023 c 103: "(1) The legislature finds that robocalls are increasingly used by entities to mislead and deceive Washington residents and induce them into providing personal information to wrongfully obtain something of value. It is the intent of the legislature to expand the scope of existing provisions in RCW 80.36.390, 80.36.400, and 19.158.020 regulating robocalls and telephone solicitations to prohibit abusive telephone communications that mislead or harm Washington residents.

(2) The legislature further finds that the most effective way to prevent illegal robocalling is to ensure that those calls never originate or enter the telephone network. Therefore, it is further the intent of the legislature to extend liability to those persons who provide substantial assistance or support in the origination and transmission of robocalls that violate RCW 80.36.400.

(3) It is also the intent of the legislature to:

(a) Include a provision in RCW 80.36.390 to prohibit the initiation of unwanted telephone calls to Washington telephone numbers on the do not call registry maintained by the federal government pursuant to the telemarketing sales rule, 16 C.F.R. Part 310, and related regulations; and

(b) Combat fraudulent or misleading caller identification." [2023 c 103 § 1.]

Legislative finding—1986 c 281: "The legislature finds that the use of automatic dialing and announcing devices for purposes of commercial solicitation: (1) Deprives consumers of the opportunity to immediately question a seller about the veracity of their claims; (2) subjects consumers to unwarranted invasions of their privacy; and (3) encourages inefficient and potentially harmful use of the telephone network. The legislature further finds that it is in the public interest to prohibit the use of automatic dialing and announcing devices for purposes of commercial solicitation." [1986 c 281 § 1.]