

WASHINGTON, DC - Today, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 1110, the "Preventing Harassment through Outbound Number Enforcement Act of 2009" or "PHONE Act", a bill sponsored by Congressman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (VA-3) by a vote of 418 to 1 ([Roll Call No. 986](#)).

The PHONE Act would provide federal criminal penalties for certain types of caller ID spoofing, which occurs when a caller uses a false caller ID during a telephone call in order to hide the caller's true identity. The bill would prohibit the use of false caller ID information in order to wrongfully obtain anything of value. The bill would also prohibit the use of a person's caller ID without their consent and with the intent to deceive the recipient of the call.

The bill would not affect legitimate business or personal disguise of one's true caller ID. Use of a single number or name for multiple callers, "Private Caller", or other disguises where there is no purpose to wrongfully obtain something of value from the person called or where it is not a knowing use of an actual person's caller ID with intent to deceive another, would continue to be legal.

"This bill is an important means of preventing identity theft and ensuring the privacy of our citizens while allowing continued disguises of a caller's identity for privacy or other legitimate purposes," said Congressman Scott.

In recent years, spoofing has become more commonplace, leading to increased security vulnerabilities and identity theft. Spoofing technology has become readily available, either through the purchase of Internet telephone equipment or through Web sites specifically set up to spoof. Because caller ID spoofing can make a call appear to come from any phone number, it has the ability to cause fraud, damaged credit and financial ruin. Call recipients sometimes divulge personal and private information to the spoofer, under the mistaken belief that it is a legitimate call.

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