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For Immediate Release

FCC PROPOSES $2 MILLION FINE AGAINST CARRIER FOR CALLER ID AUTHENTICATION FAILURES THAT RESULTED IN THOUSANDS OF ILLEGAL DEEPFAKE AI VOICE ROBOCALLS

Lingo Telecom Faces Enforcement Action for STIR/SHAKEN Violations that Facilitated Misuse of Generative AI Technology Related to the 2024 New Hampshire Primary

WASHINGTON, May 23, 2024—The Federal Communications Commission today proposed a first-of-its-kind enforcement action related to the spoofed, deepfake illegal robocalls that targeted potential New Hampshire voters prior to the January primary. Lingo Telecom transmitted these calls, incorrectly labeling them with the highest level of caller ID attestation and making it less likely that other providers could detect the calls as potentially spoofed. Lingo Telecom faces a $2 million proposed fine for apparent violations of the Commission's caller ID authentication rules.

Two days before the New Hampshire 2024 presidential primary election, illegally spoofed and malicious robocalls carried a deepfake audio recording of President Biden's cloned voice telling prospective voters not to vote in the upcoming primary. The inaccurate and misleading calls also transmitted the caller ID number of an unknowing local political operative. Political consultant Steve Kramer was responsible for the calls and had engaged Voice Broadcasting Corp., which used the services of Life Corp. to transmit calls through voice service provider Lingo Telecom. The Commission brought a separate enforcement action today against Kramer for the apparent spoofing violations.

Lingo Telecom, as the originating provider for the calls, faces a $2 million proposed fine for apparently violating the FCC's caller ID authentication rules. Lingo Telecom failed to follow "Know Your Customer" principles by applying the highest level attestation—signifying trust in the caller ID information—to apparently illegally spoofed calls without making any effort to verify the accuracy of the information. Caller ID authentication using STIR/SHAKEN standards is an essential tool, mandated by the Commission, which serves as a digital identifier for each call to empower tracebacks of suspicious calls, inform robocall blocking tools, and support more reliable caller ID information for consumers.

"It is imperative that providers employ 'Know Your Customer' protocols that will deter bad actors and limit the damage they can cause when they combine generative AI technology with spoofed caller ID information—a failure to do so undermines trust in our communications networks," said **Loyaan A. Egal, Chief of the Enforcement Bureau**. "We will hold providers accountable for failing to know their customers and for failing to uphold the rules we have in place to protect the American public."

In February, the FCC's Enforcement Bureau, in coordination with the office of the New Hampshire Attorney General, ordered Lingo Telecom to cease-and-desist from carrying the suspicious traffic. The Commission has taken such actions to block active robocall scam

campaigns, in addition to imposing financial penalties like those proposed today. These efforts to stop active campaigns have had important impacts, including FCC actions that resulted in a 99% drop in auto warranty scam robocalls, an 88% month-to-month drop in student loan scam robocalls, and the end to a predatory mortgage robocall campaign targeting homeowners nationwide.

The FCC continues its work in understanding and adjusting to the impacts of AI on robocalling and robotexting. The Commission has made clear that calls made with AI-generated voices are "artificial" under the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA), confirming that we and state Attorneys General have the needed tools to go after bad actors behind these nefarious robocalls. In addition, the FCC launched a formal proceeding to gather information on the current state of AI use in calling and texting and ask questions about new threats, like robocalls mimicking the voices of those we know. The FCC also co-hosted a workshop with the National Science Foundation that convened stakeholders to discuss AI-related topics including the challenges AI brings to consumer issues like robocalls/robotexts.

The proposed action, formally called Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture, or NAL, contains only allegations that advise a party on how they have apparently violated the law and may set forth a proposed monetary penalty. The Commission may not impose a greater monetary penalty than the amount proposed in the NAL. Neither the allegations nor the proposed sanctions in the NAL are final Commission actions. Lingo Telecom will be given an opportunity to respond and the Commission will consider submissions of evidence and legal arguments before acting further to resolve these matters.

Action by the Commission May 23, 2024 by Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture (FCC 24-60). Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Starks and Gomez approving. Commissioners Carr and Simington concurring. Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr, Starks, Simington, and Gomez issuing separate statements.

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