



## **H.R. 251 - Truth in Caller ID Act of 2007**

### **Floor Situation**

H.R. 251 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Eliot Engel (D-NY) on January 5, 2007. The bill was reported as amended by the House Committee on Energy and Commerce by voice vote on March 15, 2007.

H.R. 251 is expected to be considered on the floor on June 12, 2007.

*\*Note: In the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, Rep. Joe Barton (R-TX) introduced identical legislation, H.R. 5126, which passed the House of Representatives by voice vote on June 6, 2006. The Senate received the bill but no action was taken.*

### **Summary**

H.R. 251 makes it a Federal crime to manipulate any caller identification service to transmit misleading or inaccurate caller identification information with the intent to defraud or cause harm, commonly known as “spoofing.” This legislation applies to both traditional telephone services as well as voice over internet protocol (VOIP) services.

H.R. 251 directs the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to (1) devise regulations to implement this legislation within six months of enactment of the bill; and (2) examine whether FCC regulations should be revised to specifically prevent non-profit and political organizations from “spoofing.”

H.R. 251 protects an individual’s right to restrict their information from being transmitted over caller ID, and makes exceptions for transmitting false information for various uses including law enforcement, protection of crime tipsters, and protecting the identity of victims of domestic violence.

### **Background**

Caller identification services are offered by most telecommunications and VOIP providers and supply consumers with the name and phone number of incoming calls.

Falsely manipulating the information that appears on caller ID is referred to as “spoofing.” In recent years a number of websites have started offering a “caller ID spoofing service” where a customer can purchase a phone card that allows them to

change the phone number that appears on caller ID when they place calls on traditional telephone networks. VOIP users can “spoof” call recipients with standard VOIP software which allows users to change the information that appears on the call recipient’s caller ID.

In some instances, “spoofing” has been used to facilitate crimes such as identity theft, fraud, and harassment. Identity thieves have used spoofing to mislead call recipients into revealing personal financial information, to fraudulently authorize stolen credit cards, and to arrange fraudulent money transfers.

**Cost**

“CBO estimates that implementing the bill would cost about \$5 million over the 2008-2012 period. Enacting the bill also would affect federal revenues by increasing collections of fines and penalties, but CBO estimates that any such increase would not be significant.”

[Congressional Budget Office Cost Estimate](#)

**Staff Contact**

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