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March 23, 2021

Chairman Lawrence, Chairman Berry and Members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee,

The Office of the Public Advocate testifies in support of the Sponsor's proposed amendment to LD 511 "An Act To Require Telephone Service Providers To Provide at No Cost to Customers Services Designed To Reduce the Number of So-called Robocalls and Automatically Dialed Telephone Calls."

The Office of the Public Advocate is supportive of the intent behind the original bill, but after reviewing information the Sponsor received from the National Consumer Law Center it was clear that an amendment was appropriate. The amended language would require the telephone utility to provide details of the services designed to reduce the volume of calls received from automated telephone calling devices to the customer as well, including how to enroll in the service and at what cost. We receive numerous calls each year complaining about the volume of robocalls consumers are receiving and firmly believe that any service such as this should be offered at a "reasonably affordable cost." Ratepayers are inundated with taxes and fees on their telephone bills and we encourage the utilities to keep the costs for these services as low as possible.

We recognize this is limited to telephone utilities but would hope that other telecom providers would follow the spirit of the legislation and make the same information readily available to their customers.

Thank you for your time, attention and consideration of this testimony. The Office of the Public Advocate looks forward to working with the Committee on the amended language for LD 511, and will be present at the work session to assist the Committee in its consideration of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry J. Hobbins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Barry J. Hobbins
Public Advocate