

**Senator Luann Ridgeway's  
Capitol Report  
February 26, 2007**

**No-Call list expanded with Senator Ridgeway's legislation**

Tired of all those automated calls from computers to your home phone? How many of us got phone calls during the last election cycle from all kinds of Republicans and Democrats that weren't even from Missouri? Worse yet, the so-called "ROBO-calls" often came in back-to-back making it virtually impossible for you to call out or for friends and family to call in.

My husband and I got lots of robo-calls at our home. Seems we weren't the only ones. From the feedback I heard from many people in my district, you were also drowning in robo-calls. All in all, most people seem to be irritated by the ever-increasing use of automated calls, whether they are for political or commercial purposes.

For several years, Missouri has had a "No-Call" list. To use the list, you call a toll-free number and place your home phone number on the list. Up to this point, the list was very limited. Only home phone numbers could be placed on the list and it gave limited protection. Your cell phone and fax numbers were still free game. These large loopholes in the no-call list cost you money as most cell phone companies charge based on minutes used and extra for text messages. Unwanted faxes make you bear the expense of toner and paper and tie up your phone line.

A bill I sponsored to address this problem has successfully passed the Senate. In a nutshell, the bill puts a blanket ban on robo-calls (whether political or commercial) to any phone or fax line. In other words, many loop-holes in the no-call list would be removed.

The bill also provides exceptions for calls from those with whom you have an established business relationship. For example, your physician may use an automated call to confirm your appointment. Automated calls from public safety or emergency personnel would be allowed if they were designed to inform homeowners of an emergency situation or an Amber alert.

Laws of this nature have to be carefully crafted so that it will pass constitutional muster. While political robo-calls seemed to be the source of the greatest irritation last November, they are certainly not the only offender. It would clearly be unconstitutional to try to limit only political speech as this is the most highly protected speech in America – and rightly so. We need to not only vote, but make an informed vote. You can't do this if you don't have information.

Many avenues of contact remain available to commercial and political advertisers to get their message across. The legislation I sponsored allows calls so long as a live operator comes onto the call first to obtain your permission prior to continuing with the call. This

gives you an opportunity to say “no” and hang-up. This provision is also aimed at keeping your message machine from filling up with unwanted messages. Also, politicians can still leave information on your door, in your mail, on TV and radio and newspapers. The law tries to strike a balance between the need to communicate information and the right of a person to not be harassed in their home and preserve your right of privacy.

My legislation was combined with several other bills of a similar nature. If you want to look at the full text of the legislation, SB 49, 65, 210 and 251 can be found on the web at [www.senate.mo.gov](http://www.senate.mo.gov). We will also be happy to send you a copy by calling my office toll-free at 866-875-8348.

The proposal now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

Please stay in touch on this or any other matter of concern to you!

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