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Rep. Caltagirone at a news conference marking Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in September.
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Watch for more information from my office as we schedule this event!

WORKING TO PROTECT PENNSYLVANIANS FROM UNWANTED TELEMARKETING CALLS

Pennsylvanians who view telemarketing and robocalls as an unwanted annoyance could soon have some relief thanks to H.B. 105, which I supported as it moved out of my committee and passed the full House.

I want to protect the citizens of Pennsylvania from unwanted marketing calls at all hours of the day and night and even on holidays. I’ve received these calls late at night and when the phone rings after hours, like most people, my heart sinks, worried that it’s bad news.

Pennsylvania already has a Do Not Call list. People can register their phone number for a five-year period. Registrants must re-register their phone number every five years.

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COMMITTEE BUSINESS IN BRIEF

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The following bills were reported out of my committee:

- H.B. 74 would add motorcycles to the Automobile Lemon Law, which protects consumers from buying or leasing faulty new motor vehicles. The bill passed the House and was sent to the Senate.
- H.B. 1094 would allow consumers to place a permanent freeze on their credit report. The bill passed the House and was sent to the Senate.
- H.B. 448 would have the Attorney General’s Office notify the Department of Aging of any investigations or actions related to telemarketing that involve consumers 60 or older. The bill passed the House and was sent to the Senate.

Bills that remain in the committee include:

- H.B. 1799 would look to promote more solar energy development in Pennsylvania.
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HOW TO FILE A CONSUMER COMPLAINT

The Pennsylvania Attorney General’s Office has resources available if you run into a problem with a business and need to file a consumer complaint.

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On the website, www.attorneygeneral.gov, you can find information about the steps you should take prior to filing a complaint and the documents and records you should include if you do have to file a complaint.

IDENTITY THEFT RESOURCES

Last year, an Equifax data breach exposed the personal information of 143 million Americans. In light of that, I wanted to remind you of a few resources you can use to protect yourself.

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If you think you are a victim of identity fraud, contact:

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If you have received one of these fraudulent calls, please contact the Office of Attorney General Bureau of Consumer Protection hotline at 800-441-2555 or email scams@attorneygeneral.gov.

Tips to avoid a scam: The Federal Communications Commission advises the following.

1. If you know you’re receiving a scam phone call, hang up, don’t press any buttons and, if you received a voicemail message, don’t call the scammer back.
2. Don’t trust Caller ID. Scammers have technology that lets them display any number or organization name on your Caller ID. If you are unfamiliar with the number calling, let it go to voicemail so you can decide if the call is important enough to return.
3. Never give out personal information such as account numbers, Social Security numbers, mother’s maiden name, passwords or other identifying information in response to unexpected calls.
4. Use extreme caution if you are being pressured for information immediately. If you are being asked to provide information or money unexpectedly, it may be a scam.

SHOPTING FOR ELECTRIC AND GAS

If you are interested in trying to save money on your natural gas or electric bills by switching suppliers, the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission has resources to help you.

In Pennsylvania, you can choose the natural gas or electric supplier that offers you the best price or provides a specific service you want. If there are competitive options available.

The PUC has two websites that can help you see the options available to you and learn more about how to shop around or switch.

Natural gas shopping: www.pagasswitch.com

Electric shopping: www.papowerswitch.com

BEWARE OF PHONE, EMAIL SCAMS

Several government agencies have recently warned consumers of possible email, phone and social media scams.

Lottery scams: Gov. Tom Wolf and the Pennsylvania Lottery issued a warning to consumers to be wary of emails, phone calls or text and social media messages from scammers posing as lottery officials, with some mentioning the Mega Millions or Powerball games.

The lottery website, www.palottery.com, contains information about common “red flags” for scams. If you suspect a scam, you should report it to the Pennsylvania Lottery by emailing lotterysecurity@pa.gov or calling 717-702-8026.

Attorney general spoof calls: Scammers have been spoofing an Office of Attorney General phone number in response to unexpected calls.

Other individuals reported scammers are using the “Grandparent Scam” from the same phone number, often targeting senior citizens by falsely claiming to be a grandchild in need.

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The bill would prohibit telephone solicitations on legal holidays.

The legislation would require telemarketers using a robocall system to provide an opt-out process within the first few seconds of each call for the person who receives the solicitation.

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CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMMITTEE Report

From the desk of REP. TOM CALTAGIRONE

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