

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2003

A N A C T

RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS

Introduced By: Representatives Kennedy, Fox, Lewiss, Naughton, and Menard

Date Introduced: February 12, 2003

Referred To: House Corporations

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 5 of the General Laws entitled "Businesses and Professions" is hereby  
2 amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 61.1

4 UNSOLICITED TELEPHONE SALES CALLS

5 **5-61.1-1. Definitions as used in this chapter.** – (1) "Consumer" means any individual  
6 who is a resident of this state and a prospective recipient of consumer goods or services;

7 (2) "Consumer goods or services" means any article or service that is purchased, leased,  
8 exchanged or received primarily for personal, family or household purposes, and includes, but is  
9 not limited to, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, annuities and other financial products;

10 (3) "Department" means the department of attorney general;

11 (4) "Doing business in this state" means conducting telephonic sales calls: (i) from a  
12 location in this state; or (ii) from a location outside of this state to consumers residing in this state  
13 or by any person or entity required to register pursuant to section 5-61-3.

14 (5) "Marketing or sales solicitation" means the initiation of a telephone call or message to  
15 encourage the purchase or rental of, or investment in, property, goods or services, that is  
16 transmitted to any consumer, but does not include a telephone call or message: (i) to any  
17 consumer's prior express written or verbal invitation or permission; (ii) by a tax-exempt nonprofit  
18 organization; or (iii) to a consumer in response to a visit made by such consumer to an  
19 establishment selling, leasing or exchanging consumer goods or services at a fixed location;

1           (6) "Telephonic sales call" means a call made by a telephone solicitor to a consumer for  
2 the purpose of: (i) engaging in a marketing or sales solicitation; (ii) soliciting an extension of  
3 credit for consumer goods or services; or (iii) obtaining information that will or may be used for  
4 marketing or sales solicitation or exchange of or extension of credit for consumer goods or  
5 services;

6           (7) "Telephone solicitor" means any individual, association, corporation, partnership,  
7 limited partnership, limited liability company or other business entity, or subsidiary or affiliate  
8 thereof, doing business in this state that makes or causes to be made a telephonic sales call;

9           (8) "Unsolicited telephone sales call" means any telephonic sales call other than a call  
10 made: (i) in response to an express written or verbal request of the consumer called; (ii) primarily  
11 in connection with an existing debt or contract, payment or performance of which has not been  
12 completed at the time of the call; or (iii) to an existing customer, unless such customer has stated  
13 to the telephone solicitor that such customer no longer wishes to receive the telephonic sales calls  
14 of such telephonic solicitor; and

15           (9) "Caller identification service or device" means any telephone service or device that  
16 permits a consumer to see the telephone number of incoming calls.

17           **5-61.1-2. No sales solicitation call list.** – (a) The department shall establish and maintain  
18 a "no sales solicitation call" listing of consumers who do not wish to receive unsolicited  
19 telephonic sales calls. The department may contract with a private vendor to establish and  
20 maintain such listing provided the private vendor has maintained national "no sales solicitation  
21 calls" listing for more than two (2) years, and the contract requires the vendor to provide the "no  
22 sales solicitation calls" listing in printed hard copy format and in any other format required by the  
23 department. The listing shall be at no cost to the consumer and shall be updated quarterly. The  
24 consumer may indicate any exclusion for their listing on a form provided by the department.

25           (b) The list shall be purchased by every telephone solicitor doing business in this state  
26 and registered pursuant to section 5-61-3 for a fee determined by the department. The list shall be  
27 updated within thirty (30) days of the end of each quarter.

28           (c) The department shall provide notice to consumers of the establishment of a "no sales  
29 solicitation calls" listing. Any consumer who wishes to be included on such listing shall notify  
30 the department in such a manner and such times as the department may prescribe.

31           **5-61.1-3. Directories.** – (a) Any person who obtains the name, residential address or  
32 telephone number of any consumer from published telephone directories or from any other source  
33 and republishes or compiles such information, electronically or otherwise, and sells or offers to  
34 sell such publication or compilation to telephone solicitors for marketing or sales solicitation

1 purposes, shall exclude from any such publication or compilation, and from the database used to  
2 prepare such publication or compilation, the name, address and telephone number or numbers of  
3 any consumer if the consumer's name and telephone number or numbers appear in the then  
4 current quarterly "no sales solicitation calls" listing made available by the department under  
5 section 5-61.1-2.

6 (b) This section does not apply to any telephone company or its affiliates for the sole  
7 purpose of compiling, publishing or distributing telephone directories or causing the compilation,  
8 publication or distribution of telephone directories or providing directory assistance for the sole  
9 purpose of compiling, publishing or distributing telephone directories for such telephone  
10 company pursuant to an agreement or other arrangement with such telephone company.

11 **5-61.1-4. Prohibitions/Penalties** – (a) No telephone solicitor shall make or cause to be  
12 made any unsolicited telephonic sales calls to any consumer if the consumer's name and  
13 telephone number or numbers appear on the then current "no sales solicitation calls" listing made  
14 available by the department.

15 (b) Any violation of the provisions of subsection (a) shall be deemed an unfair or  
16 deceptive trade practice under chapter 6-13.1 of the general laws and shall be subject to the  
17 penalties therein and/or a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for a first violation not  
18 to exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for a second or subsequent violation except that no  
19 liability shall be incurred under this section if:

20 (1) such telephone solicitor established and implemented written procedures and trained  
21 its employees to follow such procedures to comply with subsection (a);

22 (2) such telephone solicitor deleted from its call list any listing of a consumer on the then  
23 current quarterly "no sales solicitation calls" listing; and

24 (3) such call was made inadvertently.

25 (c) No telephone solicitor shall intentionally cause to be installed or shall intentionally  
26 use any blocking device or service to circumvent a consumer's use of a caller identification  
27 service or device, or use any phone number that will not receive an incoming call.

28 (d) The provisions in subsections (a) and (b) shall not apply to any of the following:

29 (1) telephone calls made in response to the express request of, or an advertisement by, the  
30 person called;

31 (2) telephone calls made in connection with the collection of a debt or the offer by a  
32 creditor to the person called of an extension of credit to pay a delinquent obligation owed by the  
33 person called to the creditor;

34 (3) telephone calls that the telephone subscriber exempted from the coverage of the "do

1 not call" list as provided in section 5-61.1-2(a);

2 (4) Any supervised financial institution or parent, subsidiary, or affiliate thereof. As used  
3 in this paragraph, "supervised financial institution" means any commercial bank, trust company,  
4 savings and loan association, credit union, industrial loan company, personal property broker,  
5 consumer finance lender, commercial finance lender, or insurer; provided, that the institution is  
6 subject to supervision by an official or agency of this state or of the United States;

7 (5) A person or affiliate of a person whose business is regulated by the public utilities  
8 commission.

9 **5-61.1-5. Civil actions.** – (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 561.1-4 any  
10 person who has received a telephone solicitation that is prohibited by section 5-61.1-4 may bring  
11 a civil action in any court of competent jurisdiction against a telephonic solicitor to recover or  
12 obtain any one or more of the following remedies:

13 (1) an order to enjoin the violation;

14 (2) a civil penalty of up to one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for the first violation and up to  
15 five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for a second and each subsequent violation;

16 (3) court costs, including reasonable attorneys' fees; and

17 (4) any other relief that the court deems proper.

18 **5-61.1-6. Rules.** – The department may adopt rules and regulations to carry out the  
19 provisions of this chapter. Such rules and regulations may include, but shall not be limited to, all  
20 requests relating to the procedures used by any vendor, provisions governing the availability and  
21 distribution of the listing established under section 5-61.1-2 and notice requirements for  
22 consumers wishing to be included on the listing established under section 5-61.1-2 of this chapter.

23 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect on January 15, 2004.

=====  
LC01909  
=====

EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS

\*\*\*

- 1           This act would establish a "no sales solicitation calls" list made available by the  
2 department of attorney general in order to protect consumers from unsolicited telephonic sales  
3 calls. This act would also provide for violations by entities doing business in this state.  
4           This act would take effect on January 15, 2004.

=====  
LC01909  
=====

