

**PA 14-14**

HB5098

House	801-807	7
Senate	1775, 1885-1886	3
<u>General Law</u>	<u>124</u>	<u>1</u>
		<b>11</b>

**H - 1183**

**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
2014**

**VOL.57  
PART 3  
685 - 1026**

Seeing none, let's get started with our business of the day.

Mr. Clerk, will you please call Calendar Number 127.

THE CLERK:

Yes, on today's calendar, page 7, Calendar Number 127, favorable report of the Joint Standing Committee on General Law, House Bill 5098, AN ACT CONCERNING THE TERMINATION OF "ROBO" CALLS.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The distinguished chairman of the General Law Committee, Representative Baram, you have the floor, sir.

REP. BARAM (15th):

Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Question is on acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

Will you remark, sir.

REP. BARAM (15th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Existing law provides that anybody giving a unsolicited "robo" call must make sure that the call terminates when a consumer hangs up when these calls are for commercial, business, or advertising purposes. The existing fine is \$500. This bill merely increases the fine to \$1,000 to help deter any violations of this Act.

This was passed unanimously by the General Law Committee. It takes effect October 1, 2014. There is no adverse fiscal note, and I urge passage of the bill.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Would you care to remark? Would you care to remark further?

Representative Carter.

REP. CARTER (2nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Through you, a few questions to the proponent of the bill.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. CARTER (2nd):

As I stand -- understand, when this went through committee, there were some concerns in the beginning from utilities and of the nature that this may make it more difficult for them to do important verbal calls that they have to do for their service, specifically things like weather emergencies. Could you comment if this actually affects their ability to call their customers during a weather emergency. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Baram.

REP. BARAM (15th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the intent of this bill is to just address commercial business and marketing "robo" calls. And, in specific, the Department of Consumer Protection has indicated to me upon inquiry and also has on their website that emergency calls for purposes of health and safety are not governed by this law. So if there were any telephone calls for weather conditions, power outages, and the like, that would not constitute a violation of this Act.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Carter.

REP. CARTER (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, then, for health and safety would that also include somebody having a shut-off notice? Could -- could the company still call and give them notice through this? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Baram.

REP. BARAM (15th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes, they could do that.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Carter.

REP. CARTER (2nd):

So, through you, Mr. Speaker, the only thing this bill does differently than that's what is in statute now is it just raises the fine? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Baram.

REP. BARAM (15th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, that is correct.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Carter.

REP. CARTER (2nd):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I think this bill is a good bill, and it's an opportunity for us to highlight the fact that the companies using "robo" calls the wrong way would face an increased fine and ought to pass. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Would you care to remark further on the bill that is before us?

Representative Nicastro. Representative Nicastro.

REP. NICASTRO (79th):

Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, sir.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Good morning, sir.

REP. NICASTRO (79th):

Mr. Speaker, I stand in strong support of this bill. Mr. Speaker, "robo" calls are out of control. I know we passed legislation a while back, but it still continues to happen. I've had -- I've been bombarded with them just like everybody else have. My constituents have been bombarded with them. You know what really irritates me is when they call you and you

hang up, it's supposed to disconnect. It doesn't disconnect, and you pick up your phone 30 seconds later and they're still talking. And let me tell you my concern about that. Many senior citizens do not have cell phones.

Let's assume there's an emergency and the senior citizen needs to use their phone, they go to pick up the phone, it's still going to be tied up. "Robo" calls have got to -- they've got to come to a halt. They're wrong, we say they're wrong, we passed legislation before, we're increasing the fine. This is a necessity. It could save lives, and that's what we're here for. We're here to -- we're here to protect our constituents.

I strongly recommend passage of this bill. I'd ask my fellow legislators to support this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Would you care to remark further on the bill that's before us?

If not, staff and guests to the well of the House, members take your seats, the machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll.

The House of Representatives is voting by roll. Will members please return to the chamber immediately.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted? Will the members please check the board to make sure your vote is properly cast. If all the members have voted, the machine will be locked -- if all the members have voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally.

Will the Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Bill Number 5098.

Total number voting	142
Necessary for passage	72
Those voting Yea	142
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	7

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The bill passes.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar Number 44.

THE CLERK:

**S - 674**

**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
2014**

**VOL. 57  
PART 6  
1656 - 1970**

Madam Clerk.

(Senator Coleman of the 2nd in the Chair.)

THE CHAIR:

Would the Clerk please return to the Call of the Calendar. Would the Senate please stand at ease.

(Chamber at ease.)

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Mr. President, for some additional markings.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes. First of all, Mr. President, to begin a Consent Calendar, Calendar page two, Calendar 145, House Bill 5329. Mr. President, would move to place that item on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Without objection, so ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

And also, Mr. President, Calendar page nine, Calendar 342, House Bill 5098, move to place on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

That objection is so ordered.

On page five, Calendar 295, Senate Bill 445.

On page nine, Calendar 342, House Bill 5098.

And on page 10, Calendar 343, House Bill 5259.

On page 13, Calendar 404, Senate Bill 456.

Page 14, Calendar 408, Senate Bill 489.

On page 16, Calendar 430, House Bill 5285.

On page 18, Calendar 439, House Bill 5540.

On page 26, Calendar 497, House Bill 5081.

And on page 29, Calendar 511, House Bill 5146.

Page 30, Calendar 53, Senate Bill 203, and Calendar 95, Senate Bill 176.

On page 31, Calendar 116, Senate Bill 430.

Page 38, Calendar 280, Senate Bill 312.

And on page 41, Calendar 395, Senate 104.

THE CHAIR:

I guess that's all it. Okay.

Mr. Clerk, will you please open the machines and -- I'll open the machines. You call for a roll call vote.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call is ordered in the Senate on today's Consent Calendar. Immediate roll call ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

If all members have voted, if all members have voted, the machine will be closed.

Mr. Clerk, will you call the tally.

THE CLERK:

On today's Consent Calendar.  
Total number voting 35  
Those voting Yea 35  
Those voting Nay 0  
Absent and not voting 1

THE CHAIR:

The Consent Calendar passes. Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, before concluding today's session, would yield the floor to members who may wish to announce Committee meetings or for other points of personal privilege.

THE CHAIR:

Are there points of personal privilege? Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, while I enjoyed being at the circle today, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish my wife a very happy birthday today.

THE CHAIR:

Oh my goodness.

SENATOR FASANO:

I missed the birthday dinner, but it -- I can't think of another group to spend it with other than my wife. So happy birthday to my wife.

THE CHAIR:

**JOINT  
STANDING  
COMMITTEE  
HEARINGS**

**GENERAL  
LAW  
PART 1  
1 – 505**

**2014  
INDEX**

**Statement of UIL Holdings Corporation**

**Re: Raised House Bill 5098 – AN ACT CONCERNING THE TERMINATION OF  
“ROBO” CALLS**

**GENERAL LAW COMMITTEE – February 18, 2014**

The UIL Holdings Corporation, the holding company for two gas (Connecticut Natural Gas and Southern Connecticut Gas) and one electric (The United Illuminating Company) utility distribution companies located in the state, would like to offer comments on House Bill 5098, AN ACT CONCERNING THE TERMINATION OF “ROBO” CALLS.

In general, the Company has serious concerns over the language of the proposed bill because it could potentially limit the ability the three companies (UI, CNG and SCG) to effectively communicate with their customers about important information that would need to be shared via phone call, and in some times, in a short period of time.

For example, important information from the utility companies to customers regarding an upcoming weather event or proactive notifications concerning electric or gas service outages at their home or place of business would be adversely affected. These calls are proactive in nature and affect all customers, but especially customers with medical conditions.

In addition, the language of the proposed bill may also limit the three companies' ability to communicate with customers about billing issues, especially regarding service termination notices. The notices begin after 33-day period of non-payment of utility bills. As a result, the three companies have been contacting customers on a more frequent basis in an attempt to discuss and arrange payment options to avoid service interruptions. UIL Holdings suggest that the committee must revise the language of the raised bill to be clear that a “hang up” by the customer, doesn't mean that the utilities cannot call again. Eliminating these calls could result in a more difficult situation for both the utility and the resident, who could have their gas or electric service shut off because there would be a gap in time-sensitive communications.

If you have additional questions, please contact Carlos Vázquez, UIL Senior Director of Government Relations at (203) 521-2455 or Al Carbone, UIL Government Relations Professional at (203) 671-4421.