



FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION  
PROTECTING AMERICA'S CONSUMERS

## Marketer of Robocalling Services Banned from Telemarketing

FOR RELEASE

April 17, 2014

The head of an operation that enabled telemarketers to make illegal robocalls, call phone numbers on the National Do Not Call Registry, and mask Caller ID information, is permanently banned from telemarketing and robocalling under a settlement with the federal government.

In November 2011, on the Federal Trade Commission's behalf, the Department of Justice filed a [complaint alleging that Joseph Turpel sold services to telemarketers](#) who were violating the FTC's Telemarketing Sales Rule. The complaint alleged that Turpel knew, or consciously avoided knowing, that clients used his services while calling numbers on the National Do Not Call Registry, transmitting inaccurate caller ID information, and making illegal prerecorded telemarketing solicitations (robocalls).

According to the complaint, Turpel's clients offered credit card services, home security systems, and grant procurement programs. He allegedly gave clients the means to hide their identity by transmitting inaccurate caller names, such as "SERVICE MESSAGE" or "SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT," on caller ID displays.

In addition to banning Turpel from telemarketing and robocalling, the [settlement order imposes a \\$395,000 civil penalty](#) that is suspended based on his inability to pay. The full penalty will become due immediately if Turpel is found to have misrepresented his financial condition.

The Commission vote authorizing DOJ staff to file the proposed stipulated final order was 4-0. The final order was entered by the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California on April 15, 2014.

The Federal Trade Commission works for consumers to prevent fraudulent, deceptive, and unfair business practices and to provide information to help spot, stop, and avoid them. To file a complaint in English or Spanish, visit the FTC's online [Complaint Assistant](#) or call 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357). The FTC enters complaints into Consumer Sentinel, a secure, online database available to more than 2,000 civil and criminal law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and abroad. The FTC's website provides [free information on a variety of consumer topics](#). Like the FTC on [Facebook](#), follow us on [Twitter](#), and [subscribe to press releases](#) for the latest FTC news and resources.

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JUSTICE NEWS

Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, November 22, 2011

**U.S. Files Suit Against California Company for Allegedly Violating the Telemarketing Sales Rule**

WASHINGTON - The United States has filed suit against Sonkei Communications Inc., and its principal corporate officers, Peter Turpel and Joseph Turpel, the Justice Department announced today. The government's complaint, filed in U.S. District Court for the Central District of California, alleges that the defendants violated the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) Telemarketing Sales Rule (TSR) through their telemarketing service, which facilitates delivery of robocalls by telemarketers claiming to offer products and services to consumers throughout the United States, including home security systems, grant procurement programs, and credit card services. Sonkei is based in Newbury Park, Calif.

The TSR established the National Do Not Call Registry for consumers who do not wish to receive certain telemarketing calls, and generally prohibits calling these consumers. The TSR also prohibits "robocalls," that is, telephone calls that deliver a prerecorded message if the seller has not first obtained the recipient's consent to receive these calls.

The government's complaint alleges that the defendants assisted and facilitated abusive practices by their telemarketing customers, including calling telephone numbers registered on the National Do Not Call Registry and placing unauthorized robocalls to consumers, in violation of the Telemarketing Sales Rule.

In addition, the complaint alleges that the illegal calls allegedly placed by the defendants' customers have generated tens of thousands of complaints from consumers and businesses. In its lawsuit, the government asks the court to impose civil penalties for the defendants' conduct and to enjoin them from further TSR violations. The complaint, which the Justice Department filed with the assistance of the FTC, is based on the FTC's investigation of the defendants' telemarketing service.

"The Telemarketing Sales Rule, including the Do Not Call Registry, aims to shield consumers from a barrage of sales calls they don't want which push products they don't need," said Tony West, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Division of the Department of Justice. "We will work with the FTC to identify and penalize those who violate the rule and can't take 'no' for an answer."

Individuals who believe they have received calls in violation of the TSR should register their complaints with the FTC. To file a complaint in English or Spanish, visit the FTC's online [Complaint Assistant](http://www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov/) (www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov/) or call 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357). This case is being prosecuted by Department of Justice, Civil Division, Consumer Protection Branch attorneys Sondra Mills and Matthew Ebert.