

## House Republican Press Release

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### REP. FREY TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO BAN 'ROBO CALLS'



*Ridgefielders, state residents have had enough of automated calls, says local legislator*

State Representative John H. Frey, R-Ridgefield, today pledged to introduce legislation to prevent political campaigns from calling residents who do not wish to receive automated phone messages, commonly known as 'robo-calls.' Rep. Frey will introduce the bill at the start of the Legislature's 2007 Session in January.

The legislation would likely make political phone calls using automated messages for all or part of the transmission subject to the state's do-not call list. Connecticut's Do Not Call Law, which was co-sponsored by Rep. Frey, was one of the first in the country, enacted in 2001 as a means of limiting unwanted telephone solicitations to Connecticut residents. Due to its success and similar success in other states, the federal government began a National Do Not Call registry in 2003. This national registry is available to all consumers in all 50 states. Several states have also added political calls to their own do-not call registries.

In recent years, hotly contested political races have employed the automated calls and the number of calls from competing candidates and supporters appears to escalate with each political cycle. They are also among the most annoying calls local residents receive, said Rep. Frey.

"During the past few months, I have heard over and over again from Ridgefielders about how much they can't stand a machine calling them to make a pitch for a candidate," said Rep. Frey, who serves as an Assistant Minority Leader. "The state's initial version do-not call registry really should have included automated political calls and that fact has been hammered home by their increase in recent years. I look forward to working with my colleagues in Hartford to find a way to put a stop to them as quickly as possible."

Enforcement tools for the state violating the existing state do-not call registry include cease and desist orders, injunctions, civil penalties up to \$5,000 for willful violations, and up to \$25,000 for violations of court injunctions. The Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) reports that most often, a simple warning and reminder letter from the

agency puts an end to specific problems. Consumers may also file a criminal complaint against telemarketers whom they feel are harassing them.