

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-7012

January 13, 2006

The Honorable Kevin J. Martin  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Room 8 - B201  
Washington, D.C. 20554

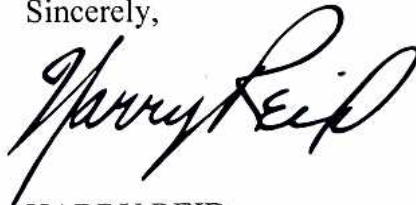
Dear Chairman Martin:

This week there have been numerous reports of phone customers' proprietary information being made available for purchase online. Several major news outlets reported that anyone can obtain the cell or landline phone number of any user, or gain access to the calling record related to any cell phone number, by visiting certain Web sites and paying a fee. Selling confidential information about someone without that person's permission is a remarkable assault on the privacy rights of Americans and could even pose a risk to our national security and law enforcement capabilities.

A right to privacy is fundamental for all Americans and I take very seriously these reports of widespread, unapproved information brokering. There is a shared responsibility among different federal agencies for ensuring that American's private information is protected and not misused. As the federal regulator of mobile and landline telephone-service providers, the Federal Communications Commission (the "Commission") has a unique role in making certain that these providers are protecting their customers' proprietary information as required under federal communications law.

I therefore request that the Commission immediately begin an investigation into how online data brokers are obtaining Americans' private phone records, and whether phone companies are doing enough to protect the personal and private information with which they are entrusted. The Commission should consider whether any laws have been broken or whether there are any loopholes in current law that need to be closed to stop the abuse of consumers' personal information. The Commission must ensure that it is doing all that it can to protect Americans' private information.

Sincerely,



HARRY REID  
United States Senator