

# NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:  
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## **Nader and Commercial Alert Propose “Family Hours” Free From Telemarketing Intrusions**

Ralph Nader and Commercial Alert proposed today that Congress and state legislatures enact legislation establishing “Family Hours” between 6 and 9 PM every night, during which telemarketing firms could not place unsolicited commercial calls.

“‘Family Hours’ would be the equivalent of hanging a ‘no solicitors’ sign on your telephone every evening from 6 to 9 PM,” Nader said.

“We ought to protect families against the invasions of corporate predators,” Nader said. “Families should spend time together without interruption from commercial telemarketers. That’s what ‘Family Hours’ are all about.”

“Families are more important than the mercantile bombardments of telemarketers,” said Gary Ruskin, director of Commercial Alert. “Congress ought to preserve the sanctuary of home against those who would repeatedly intrude unsolicited commerce into the family’s time.”

The telemarketing industry is booming. Between 1992-97, telemarketing sales to consumers grew at an annual rate of 6.6%, to \$185.9 billion in 1997, according to the Direct Marketing Association, Inc. A June 29 article in Precision Marketing, stated that the telemarketing “industry is positively flourishing and has enjoyed another bumper year.”

Telemarketers boast of their political influence. “The telemarketing industry became a highly visible presence in a number of state legislatures this year,” wrote American Telemarketing Association attorney C. Tyler Prochnow in the July 6, 1998 issue of DM News. “An effective one-two punch of hired lobbyists and company representatives participated in the legislative process to deliver a knockout blow for the industry.”

“It’s time for parents and families to stand up to greedy telemarketers and their lobbyists,” Nader said.

“There’s a long tradition of the dinner table as the family meeting place,” Ruskin said. “On some days, dinnertime is the only time that parents have to talk with their kids. We ought to protect this precious family time against commercial intrusions.”

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules currently prohibit commercial telephone solicitation calls to homes before 8 AM or after 9 PM.

In 1991, Congress passed the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA), which requires telemarketers to keep “do-not call” lists. It also regulates the use of automatic telephone dialing systems and prerecorded calls. In June, President Clinton signed the Telemarketing Fraud Protection Act, which strengthens penalties for telemarketing fraud.

Commercial Alert is a new project devoted to helping parents, families and communities defend themselves against harmful, immoral or intrusive advertising and marketing, and the excesses of commercialism. Commercial Alert’s web address is <<http://www.essential.org/alert/>>. -30-