IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT

DANIEL REASE, individually and on behalf	of
all others similarly situated,	

Plaintiff,

v.

CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

Defendant.

CASE NUMBER:

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

Plaintiff Daniel Rease, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated, complains and alleges as follows based on personal knowledge as to himself, on the investigation of his counsel, and on information and belief as to all other matters. Plaintiff believes that substantial evidentiary support exists for the allegations set forth in this complaint, and that a reasonable opportunity for discovery will reveal such evidence.

NATURE OF ACTION

1. Plaintiff brings this Class Action Complaint for legal and equitable remedies resulting from the illegal actions of Charter Communications, Inc. ("Defendant") in sending automated text messages to his cellular telephone and the cellular telephones of numerous other individuals across the country, in clear violation of the Telephone Consumer Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. § 227 ("TCPA").

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 2. The Court has subject-matter jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331 and 47 U.S.C. § 227.
- 3. Personal jurisdiction and venue are proper because Defendant maintains its corporate headquarters in this District.

PARTIES

- 4. Plaintiff is an individual and a "person" as defined by 47 U.S.C. § 153(39). Plaintiff is, and at all times mentioned herein was, a resident and citizen of Florida.
- 5. Defendant Charter Communications, Inc. is a telecommunications and mass media company that offers its services to over 26 million customers in 41 states under the "Spectrum" branding. Defendant is organized and incorporated under the laws of Delaware and maintains, and at all times mentioned herein maintained, its corporate headquarters in Stamford, Connecticut. Defendant is a "person" as defined by 47 U.S.C. § 153(39).

THE TELEPHONE CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT OF 1991

- 6. In 1991, faced with a national outcry over the volume of robocalls being received by American consumers, Congress enacted the TCPA to address certain abuse telecommunications practices.
- 7. The TCPA prohibits, *inter alia*, making any telephone call to a cellular telephone using a "prerecorded or artificial voice" or an "automatic telephone dialing system" ("ATDS" or "autodialer") absent an emergency purpose or the "express consent" of the party called.
- 8. According to findings by the Federal Communication Commission ("FCC"), which is vested with authority to issue regulations implementing the TCPA, autodialed calls and text messages are prohibited because receiving them is a greater nuisance and more invasive than receiving live or manually dialed telephone solicitations. The FCC also recognized that wireless customers are charged for such incoming calls and texts whether they pay in advance or after the minutes are used. Moreover, because cellular telephones are carried on their owners' persons, unsolicited calls and texts transmitted to such devices via an autodialer are distracting and aggravating to their recipients and intrude upon their recipients' seclusion.
- 9. To state a cause of action for violation of the TCPA, a plaintiff need only set forth allegations demonstrating that the defendant "called a number assigned to a cellular telephone service using an automatic dialing system or prerecorded voice." *Breslow v. Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.*, 857 F. Supp. 2d 1316, 1319 (S.D. Fla. 2012), *aff'd*, 755 F.3d 1265 (11th Cir. 2014).

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS COMMON TO ALL CLAIMS

- 10. Plaintiff was at all times mentioned herein the subscriber of the cellular telephone number (727) ***-7106 (the "7106 Number"). The 7106 Number is, and at all times mentioned herein was, assigned to a cellular telephone service as specified in 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1)(A)(iii).
- 11. During the preceding four years, Defendant transmitted, by itself or through an intermediary or intermediaries, multiple text messages to Plaintiff's 7106 Number and multiple text messages (that were identical to or substantially the same as those received by Plaintiff) to each member of the putative Class.
- 12. All of the subject text messages received by Plaintiff and the members of the putative Class were transmitted by or on behalf of Defendant without the requisite prior "express consent" of Plaintiff or any member of the putative Class.
- 13. For example, on or about January 13, 2020, Defendant transmitted or caused to be transmitted, by itself or through an intermediary or intermediaries, and without Plaintiff's prior "express consent," a text message to the 7106 Number that stated as follows:

Spectrum Mobile: Thanks for your order. Your order total is \$41.42. We'll update you when your mobile order ships.

14. Shortly after receiving the foregoing text message, Plaintiff sent the following text message in response: "I never ordered anything from Spectrum Mobile!" Defendant ignored Plaintiff's message and, the following day, January 14, 2020, sent Plaintiff another unsolicited, autodialed text message that stated: "Thank you for your Spectrum Mobile order. Your order has shipped. Here is your tracking#: 151745984576". Fed up with Defendant's invasive messages, and growing concerned that he had been billed by Defendant for something he did not order, Plaintiff placed a telephone call to Defendant's customer service hotline. After explaining to the representative on the other end of the line that he'd been receiving text messages concerning an order he never placed, with a company he'd never even done business with, the representative speculated that perhaps Defendant's system had received "an incorrect number" from someone,

and advised Plaintiff "not to worry" about the unsolicited text messages he was receiving because, according to Defendant's representative, "this happens a lot."

- 15. Each unsolicited text message sent by or on behalf of Defendant to Plaintiff's 7106 Number originated from the telephone number 87598, which is a dedicated SMS short code leased or owned by or on behalf of Defendant that Defendant uses to transmit text messages to consumers *en masse*, in an automated fashion and without human intervention.
- 16. Because Plaintiff's cellular phone alerts him whenever he receives a text message, each unsolicited text message transmitted by or on behalf of Defendant to Plaintiff's 7106 Number invaded Plaintiff's privacy and intruded upon his seclusion upon receipt.
- 17. All telephone contact by Defendant or affiliates, subsidiaries, or agents of Defendant to Plaintiff's 7106 Number and to the numbers belonging to the unnamed Class members occurred using an "automatic telephone dialing system" as defined by 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1)(A). Specifically, Defendant utilized an "automatic telephone dialing system" because all such text messages were sent from a dedicated SMS short code used for the exclusive purpose of transmitting text messages to consumers *en masse*; because the subject text messages contained the same or substantially the same generic, pro forma content; because the dialing equipment utilized by or on behalf of Defendant to send such messages includes features substantially similar to a predictive dialer, inasmuch as it is capable of making or initiating numerous calls or texts simultaneously (all without human intervention); and because the hardware and software used by or on behalf of Defendant to make or initiate such messages have the capacity to store, produce, and dial random or sequential numbers, and to receive and store lists of telephone numbers, and to then dial such numbers, *en masse*, in an automated fashion without human intervention.
- 18. And indeed, Defendant actually transmitted the text messages at issue in this case to Plaintiff and all other putative Class members in an automated fashion and without human intervention, with hardware and software that had the capacity to store, produce, and dial random or sequential numbers and that received and stored telephone numbers and then dialed such numbers automatically.

- 19. Neither Plaintiff nor any other member of the putative Class provided their prior "express consent" to Defendant or any affiliate, subsidiary, or agent of Defendant to transmit the subject text messages to the 7106 Number or to any other Class member's cellular telephone number by means of an "automatic telephone dialing system" within the meaning of 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1)(A).
- 20. None of Defendant's text messages to the 7106 Number or to any putative Class member's cellular telephone number was sent for an emergency purpose.

CLASS ALLEGATIONS

21. <u>Class Definition</u>. Plaintiff brings this civil class action on behalf of himself individually and on behalf of all other similarly situated persons as a class action pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23. The "Class" which Plaintiff seeks to represent is comprised of and defined as follows:

All persons in the United States who, at any time between the four years preceding the filing of this action and the present:

- (1) subscribed to a cellular telephone service;
- (2) received, at the telephone number assigned to such service, more than one text message sent by or on behalf of Defendant using the same or substantially the same dialing technology that Defendant used to transmit the subject text messages to Plaintiff; and
- (3) for whom Defendant lacks any record establishing the person's provision of "express consent" to receive such messages prior to the initiation of such messages.
- 22. Excluded from the class are Defendant, its officers and directors, members of the immediate families of the foregoing, legal representatives, heirs, successors, or assigns of the foregoing, and any entity in which Defendant has a controlling interest.
- 23. Plaintiff reserves the right to modify the definition of the Class (or add one or more subclasses) after further discovery.
- 24. Plaintiff and all Class members have been impacted and harmed by the acts of Defendant or its affiliates, agents, or subsidiaries acting on its behalf.

- 25. This Class Action Complaint seeks injunctive relief and monetary damages.
- 26. Defendant or any affiliates, subsidiaries, or agents of Defendant have acted on grounds generally applicable to the Class, thereby making final injunctive relief and corresponding declaratory relief with respect to the Class as a whole appropriate. Moreover, on information and belief, Plaintiff alleges that the TCPA violations complained of herein are substantially likely to continue in the future if an injunction is not entered.
- 27. This action may properly be brought and maintained as a class action pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23(a) and (b). This class action satisfies the numerosity, typicality, adequacy, commonality, predominance, and superiority requirements.
- 28. On application by Plaintiff's counsel for class certification, Plaintiff may also seek certification of subclasses in the interests of manageability, justice, or judicial economy.
- 29. <u>Numerosity</u>. The number of persons within the Class is substantial, believed to amount to thousands of persons dispersed throughout the United States. It is, therefore, impractical to join each member of the Class as a named plaintiff. Further, the size and relatively modest value of the claims of the individual members of the Class renders joinder impractical. Accordingly, utilization of the class action mechanism is the most economically feasible means of determining and adjudicating the merits of this litigation.
- 30. <u>Typicality</u>. Plaintiff received more than one text message from Defendant that originated from the telephone number 87598, and Defendant lacks any record establishing Plaintiff's prior "express consent" to receive any such messages within the meaning of the TCPA. Consequently, the claims of Plaintiff are typical of the claims of the members of the Class, and Plaintiff's interests are consistent with and not antagonistic to those of the other Class members he seeks to represent. Plaintiff and all members of the Class have been impacted by, and face continuing harm arising out of, Defendant's TCPA-violative misconduct as alleged herein.
- 31. <u>Adequacy</u>. As the proposed Class representative, Plaintiff has no interests adverse to or which conflict with the interests of the absent members of the Class, and he is able to fairly and adequately represent and protect the interests of such a Class. Plaintiff has raised viable

statutory claims of the type reasonably expected to be raised by members of the Class and will vigorously pursue these claims. If necessary as the litigation (including discovery) progresses, Plaintiff may seek leave to amend this Class Action Complaint to modify the Class definition set forth above, add additional Class representatives, or assert additional claims.

- 32. <u>Competency of Class Counsel</u>. Plaintiff has retained and is represented by experienced, qualified, and competent counsel committed to prosecuting this action. Plaintiff's counsel are experienced in handling complex class action claims, including in particular claims brought under the TCPA (as well as other consumer protection and data-privacy statutes).
- 33. <u>Commonality and Predominance</u>. There are well-defined common questions of fact and law that exist as to all members of the Class and predominate over any questions affecting only individual members of the Class. These common legal and factual questions, which do not vary from Class member to Class member and may be determined without reference to the individual circumstances of any Class member, include (but are not limited to) the following:
 - a) Whether Defendant or affiliates, subsidiaries, or agents of Defendant sent multiple text messages to Plaintiff's and the Class members' cellular telephones;
 - b) Whether such text messages were sent using an "automatic telephone dialing system";
 - c) Whether Defendant can meet its burden to show that it (or any disclosed affiliate, subsidiary, or agent of Defendant acting on its behalf) obtained prior "express consent" within the meaning of the TCPA to transmit the subject text messages to the recipients of such messages, assuming such an affirmative defense is timely raised;
 - d) Whether Defendant or any affiliates, subsidiaries, or agents of Defendant should be enjoined from engaging in such conduct in the future.
- 34. <u>Superiority.</u> A class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy because the prosecution of individual litigation on behalf of each Class member is impracticable. Even if every member of the Class could afford to pursue

individual litigation, the court system could not; multiple trials of the same factual issues would magnify the delay and expense to all parties and the court system. Individualized litigation would also present the potential for varying, inconsistent or contradictory judgments. By contrast, the maintenance of this action as a class action, with respect to some or all of the issues presented herein, presents few management difficulties, conserves the resources of the parties and the court system and protects the rights of each member of the Class. Plaintiff anticipates no difficulty in the management of this action as a class action. Class wide relief is essential to compel compliance with the TCPA and thus protect consumers' privacy. The interests of Class members in individually controlling the prosecution of separate claims is small because the statutory damages recoverable in an individual action for violation of the TCPA are likewise relatively small. Management of these claims is likely to present significantly fewer difficulties than are presented in many class actions because the text messages at issue are all automated and because Defendant lacks any record reflecting that it obtained the requisite consent from any Class member to be sent such messages. Class members can be readily located and notified of this class action by reference to Defendant's records and, if necessary, the records of Defendant's affiliates, agents, or subsidiaries and cellular telephone providers.

35. Additionally, the prosecution of separate actions by individual Class members would create a risk of multiple adjudications with respect to them that would, as a practical matter, be dispositive of the interests of other members of the Class who are not parties to such adjudications, thereby substantially impairing or impeding the ability of such nonparty Class members to protect their interests. The prosecution of individual actions by Class members could also establish inconsistent results and/or establish incompatible standards of conduct for Defendant.

CLAIM FOR RELIEF VIOLATION OF THE TELEPHONE CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT (47 U.S.C. § 227)

- 36. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the foregoing paragraphs of this Class Action Complaint as if fully stated herein.
- 37. Plaintiff and each member of the Class received more than one text message sent by or on behalf of Defendant during the class period. Additionally, all such messages were sent via the same dialing technology, which qualified as an ATDS within the meaning of the TCPA, as evidenced by the generic nature of the text messages, the use of a dedicated telephone number to transmit each such message, and the capacities, capabilities, and features of the dialing technology at issue, as alleged above.
- 38. Neither Plaintiff nor any other member of the Class provided Defendant his or her prior "express consent" within the meaning of the TCPA to receive the autodialed text messages at issue in this case.
- 39. Defendant's use of an ATDS to transmit the subject text messages to telephone numbers assigned to a cellular telephone service, including to Plaintiff's 7106 Number and the numbers of all members of the proposed Class, absent the requisite prior "express consent," as set forth above, constituted violations of the TCPA by Defendant, including but not limited to violations of 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1)(A)(iii).
- 40. Plaintiff and all Class members are entitled to, and do seek, an award of \$500.00 in statutory damages for each such violation of the TCPA committed by or on behalf of Defendant (or \$1,500.00 for any such violations committed willfully or knowingly) pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3).
- 41. Plaintiff, individually and on behalf of the putative Class, seeks an award of attorneys' fees and costs to Plaintiff's counsel pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff Daniel Rease prays for relief and judgment in favor of himself and the Class as follows:

- A. Injunctive relief sufficient to ensure Defendant refrains from violating the TCPA in the future;
- B. Statutory damages of \$500.00 for himself and each Class member for each of Defendant's violations of 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1) (or \$1,500.00 for each such violation to the extent committed willfully or knowingly);
- C. An Order certifying this action to be a proper class action pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23, establishing an appropriate Class and any Subclass(es) the Court deems appropriate, finding that Plaintiff is a proper representative of the Class, and appointing the attorneys representing Plaintiff as counsel for the Class; and
- D. An award of attorneys' fees and costs to Plaintiff's counsel, payable from any class-wide damages recovered by the Class, pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23.

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

On behalf of himself and all others similarly situated, Plaintiff demands a trial by jury pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 38(b) on all claims and issues so triable.

Dated: February 3, 2020 By: /s/ James J. Reardon, Jr. James J. Reardon, Jr.

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Counsel for Plaintiff and the Putative Class

^{*} Pro Hac Vice Application Forthcoming

Case 3:20-cv-00150-BNC1L Deciment 1-1 Eiled 02/03/20 Page 1 of 1

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

purpose of initiating the civil d	ocket sneet. (SEE INSTRUC	TIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF T	THIS FORM.)			
I. (a) PLAINTIFFS			DEFENDANTS			
DANIEL REASE, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated.			CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS, INC.,			
(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff Pinellas County, FL (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)			County of Residence	County of Residence of First Listed Defendant Fairfield County, CT		
			(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY) NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF			
			THE TRAC	T OF LAND INVOLVED.		
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, James J. Reardon, Jr., R 45 S. Main Street, 3rd Fl Telephone: + 1 (860) 95	oor, West Hartford, Co	r) LLP onnecticut 06110	Attorneys (If Known)		
II. BASIS OF JURISDI	CTION (Place an "X" in O	ne Box Only)			(Place an "X" in One Box for Plainti	
☐ 1 U.S. Government 🔀 3 Federal Question			(For Diversity Cases Only)	PTF DEF	and One Box for Defendant) PTF DEF	
Plaintiff (U.S. Government Not a		Not a Party)	Citizen of This State	1		
☐ 2 U.S. Government Defendant	☐ 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)		Citizen of Another State	2 2 Incorporated and of Business In		
			Citizen or Subject of a 3 3 Foreign Nation 6 6 6 Foreign Country			
IV. NATURE OF SUIT		oly)	FORFEITURE/PENALTY	Click here for: Nature BANKRUPTCY	of Suit Code Descriptions. OTHER STATUTES	
☐ 110 Insurance	PERSONAL INJURY	PERSONAL INJURY	☐ 625 Drug Related Seizure	☐ 422 Appeal 28 USC 158	☐ 375 False Claims Act	
☐ 120 Marine	□ 310 Airplane	☐ 365 Personal Injury -	of Property 21 USC 881	☐ 423 Withdrawal	☐ 376 Qui Tam (31 USC	
☐ 130 Miller Act ☐ 140 Negotiable Instrument	☐ 315 Airplane Product Liability	Product Liability 367 Health Care/	☐ 690 Other	28 USC 157	3729(a)) ☐ 400 State Reapportionment	
☐ 150 Recovery of Overpayment	☐ 320 Assault, Libel &	Pharmaceutical		PROPERTY RIGHTS	☐ 410 Antitrust	
& Enforcement of Judgment		Personal Injury		□ 820 Copyrights	☐ 430 Banks and Banking	
☐ 151 Medicare Act ☐ 152 Recovery of Defaulted	☐ 330 Federal Employers' Liability	Product Liability 368 Asbestos Personal		☐ 830 Patent ☐ 835 Patent - Abbreviated	☐ 450 Commerce ☐ 460 Deportation	
Student Loans	☐ 340 Marine	Injury Product		New Drug Application	☐ 470 Racketeer Influenced and	
(Excludes Veterans)	☐ 345 Marine Product	Liability		□ 840 Trademark	Corrupt Organizations	
☐ 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits	Liability ☐ 350 Motor Vehicle	PERSONAL PROPERTY 370 Other Fraud	LABOR 710 Fair Labor Standards	SOCIAL SECURITY 861 HIA (1395ff)	☐ 480 Consumer Credit☐ 490 Cable/Sat TV	
☐ 160 Stockholders' Suits	☐ 355 Motor Vehicle	☐ 370 Other Fraud ☐ 371 Truth in Lending	Act	☐ 862 Black Lung (923)	☐ 850 Securities/Commodities/	
☐ 190 Other Contract	Product Liability	☐ 380 Other Personal	☐ 720 Labor/Management	☐ 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g))	Exchange	
☐ 195 Contract Product Liability ☐ 196 Franchise	☐ 360 Other Personal	Property Damage	Relations	☐ 864 SSID Title XVI ☐ 865 RSI (405(g))	■ 890 Other Statutory Actions ■ 891 Agricultural Acts	
190 Franchise	Injury ☐ 362 Personal Injury -	☐ 385 Property Damage Product Liability	☐ 740 Railway Labor Act ☐ 751 Family and Medical	□ 863 KSI (403(g))	☐ 893 Environmental Matters	
	Medical Malpractice		Leave Act		☐ 895 Freedom of Information	
REAL PROPERTY	CIVIL RIGHTS	PRISONER PETITIONS	790 Other Labor Litigation	FEDERAL TAX SUITS	Act	
☐ 210 Land Condemnation ☐ 220 Foreclosure	☐ 440 Other Civil Rights ☐ 441 Voting	Habeas Corpus: ☐ 463 Alien Detainee	☐ 791 Employee Retirement Income Security Act	☐ 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant)	☐ 896 Arbitration ☐ 899 Administrative Procedure	
☐ 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment	☐ 442 Employment	☐ 510 Motions to Vacate		☐ 871 IRS—Third Party	Act/Review or Appeal of	
☐ 240 Torts to Land	□ 443 Housing/	Sentence		26 USC 7609	Agency Decision	
☐ 245 Tort Product Liability ☐ 290 All Other Real Property	Accommodations 445 Amer. w/Disabilities -	☐ 530 General ☐ 535 Death Penalty	IMMIGRATION	-	☐ 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes	
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	Other 448 Education	☐ 550 Civil Rights ☐ 555 Prison Condition	Actions			
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V. ORIGIN (Place an "X" is	n One Box Only)	Comment	1			
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VI. CAUSE OF ACTION	Brief description of ca	iuse:			TODA	
VII. REQUESTED IN		EXT messages via aut	DEMAND \$	system in violation of the	if demanded in complaint:	
COMPLAINT:	UNDER RULE 2		БЕНИИ	JURY DEMAND	*	
VIII. RELATED CASI	E(S)					
IF ANY	(See instructions):	JUDGE		DOCKET NUMBER		
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02/03/2020	/s/ James J. Reardon, Jr.					
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY			,			
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