

**Rep. Elliot Engel**  
**Subcommittee on Communications and Technology**  
**Opening Statement**  
**Legislative Hearing on “Seven Communications Bills”**  
**April 13, 2016**

Thank you, Chairman Walden and Ranking Member Eshoo, for convening today’s hearing and for your consideration of my bill, H.R. 2031, the Anti-Swatting Act.

“Swatting” refers to the act of provoking law enforcement to respond to a phony emergency. The act gets its name from the SWAT teams that are often deployed to respond to these hoaxes.

Though swatting might sound like a prank, its consequences are no laughing matter.

According to the FBI, a single SWAT team deployment can cost thousands of taxpayer dollars. Swatting also risks injury to the unassuming victims who are present when law enforcement arrives at an alleged crime scene, as well as to the officials who respond to these hoaxes, anticipating danger. On top of that, swatting wastes law enforcement’s precious time, keeping them from responding to actual, life-threatening emergencies.

I introduced the Anti-Swatting Act to address these very serious risks.

The Anti-Swatting Act would expand on the Truth in Caller ID Act, which Chairman Emeritus Joe Barton and I introduced and was signed into law in 2010.

My bill would increase penalties for people who falsify their caller ID information to mislead law enforcement. This technological trick called “spoofing” allows swatters to make law enforcement believe they are calling in an emergency from a different phone number or location. My bill would also force swatters to reimburse the emergency services that squander valuable funds responding to their invented emergency.

The goal of my bill is to dissuade potential swatters from wasting law enforcement resources and – most importantly – from putting their neighbors and emergency response teams in harm’s way.

I introduced the Anti-Swatting Act last year, following a string of swattings in my district. Incidents have also occurred in Tennessee, Ohio, New Jersey, North Carolina – the list goes on. It is my hope that this bill will keep additional communities from falling victim to these despicable crimes.