



The Robokiller phone scam report

2022 insights & analysis



Phone scams in 2022: Key takeaways

At Robokiller, it's our mission to create a world without phone scams. Part of that effort is analyzing call and text trends so that we can stop bad actors before they steal from innocent Americans.

Here are some of the biggest stories we observed in 2022.



Robotexts are far and away the leading scam threat

Scammers sent more robotexts in 2022 than ever before, and it wasn't close. Find out why they're relying so heavily on SMS.

Read more on page 3 →



Robocall growth slowed, but losses sped up

Government efforts to curb dangerous robocalls have paid dividends, but we're not out of the woods yet.

Read more on page 12 →



Phone scams in 2023: What to watch for

After reviewing historical data and spam trends, our experts predict how 2023 will turn out.

Read more on page 21 →

The state ^{of the} robotext in 2022



225+ billion

robotexts received by Americans in 2022

157%

year-over-year increase

307%

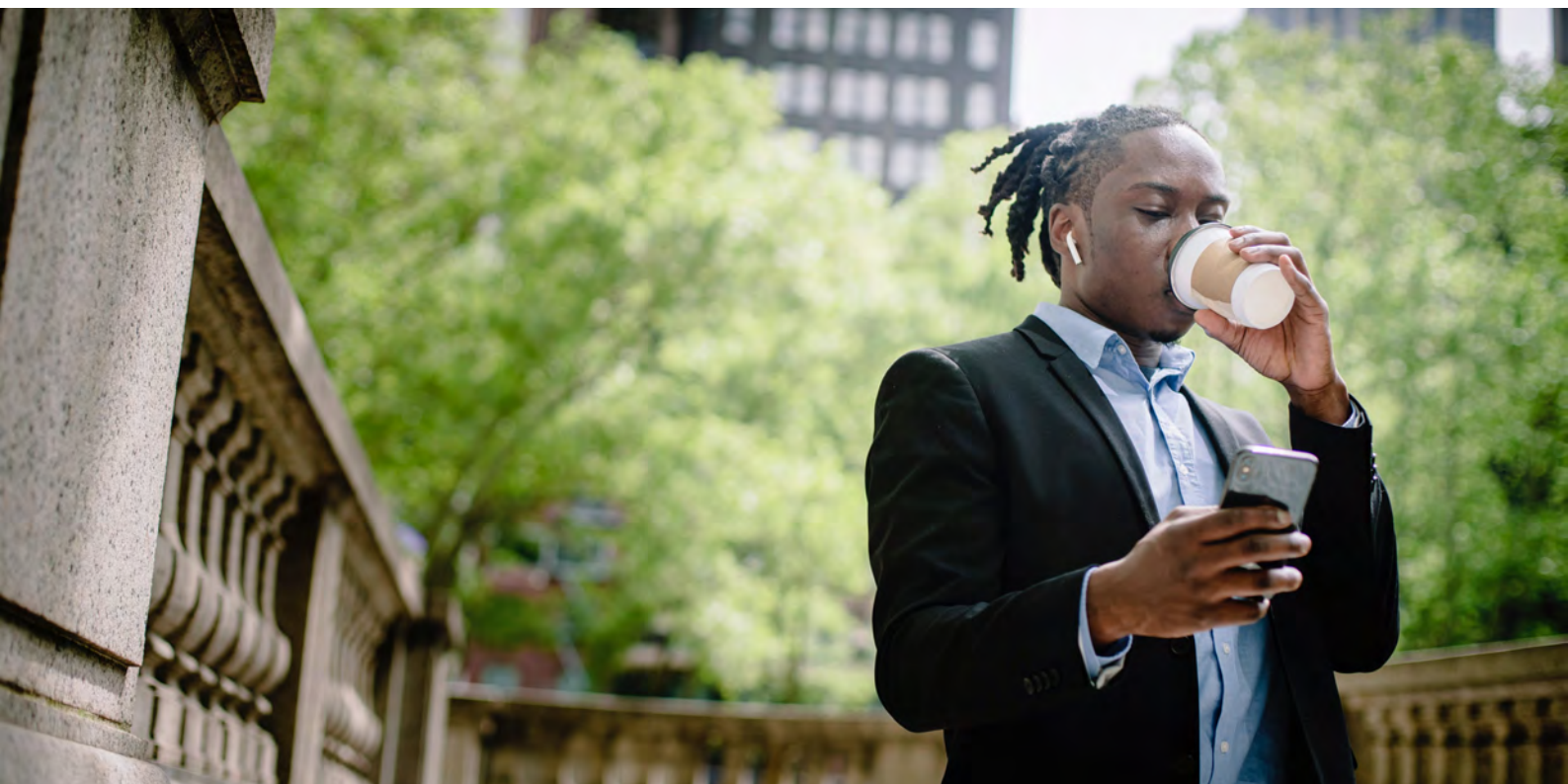
increase from 2020

\$20+ billion

estimated losses
to robotext scams in 2022

\$23+ million

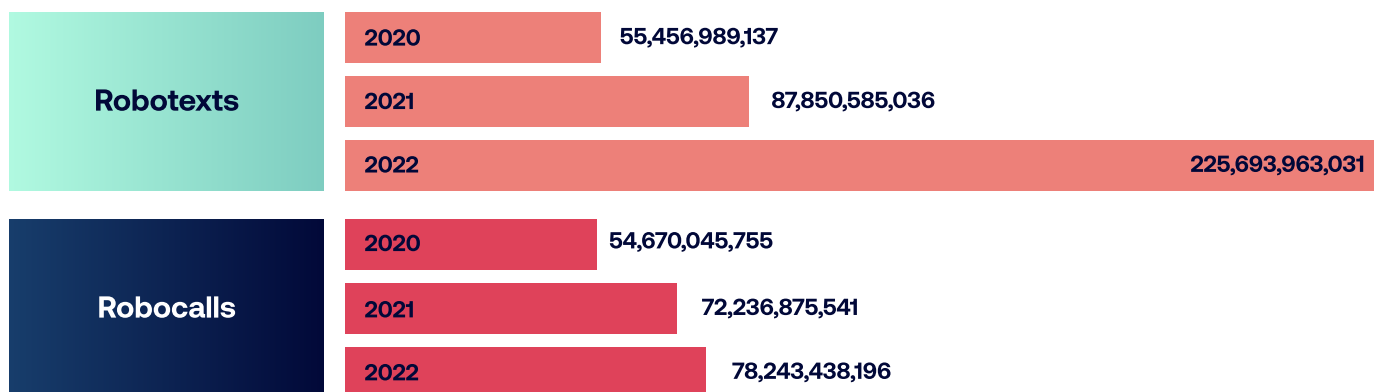
SMS scam losses prevented
by Robokiller in 2022



Robotexts are far and away the leading scam threat

If there's one thing you need to know about scammers, it's this: They'd rather text than call you. In 2022, fraudsters sent an overwhelming 225.7 billion spam texts, a remarkable 157% increase from 2021's then-record 87.8 billion.

It's not as if scammers have abandoned robocalls as a method of conning people — they still sent 78.2 billion, a relatively modest year-over-year increase of 8% — but, [as we predicted last year](#), SMS scams are here to stay.



Scammers are opportunistic and keep up with the times

Why are scammers so eager to text? One reason is because they know robocalls garner most of the good guys' attention.

The telecommunications industry has fought diligently to curb spam calls. Notably, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rolled out STIR/SHAKEN, a mandatory regulation for voice service providers designed to stop caller ID spoofing, in 2021. The focus only recently began to shift to SMS. In September, the FCC [announced](#) measures to mitigate robotexts, noting they're a growing consumer safety and privacy concern. However, it'll likely take a while before the government, carriers, and third-party apps pose a unified front against SMS fraud.

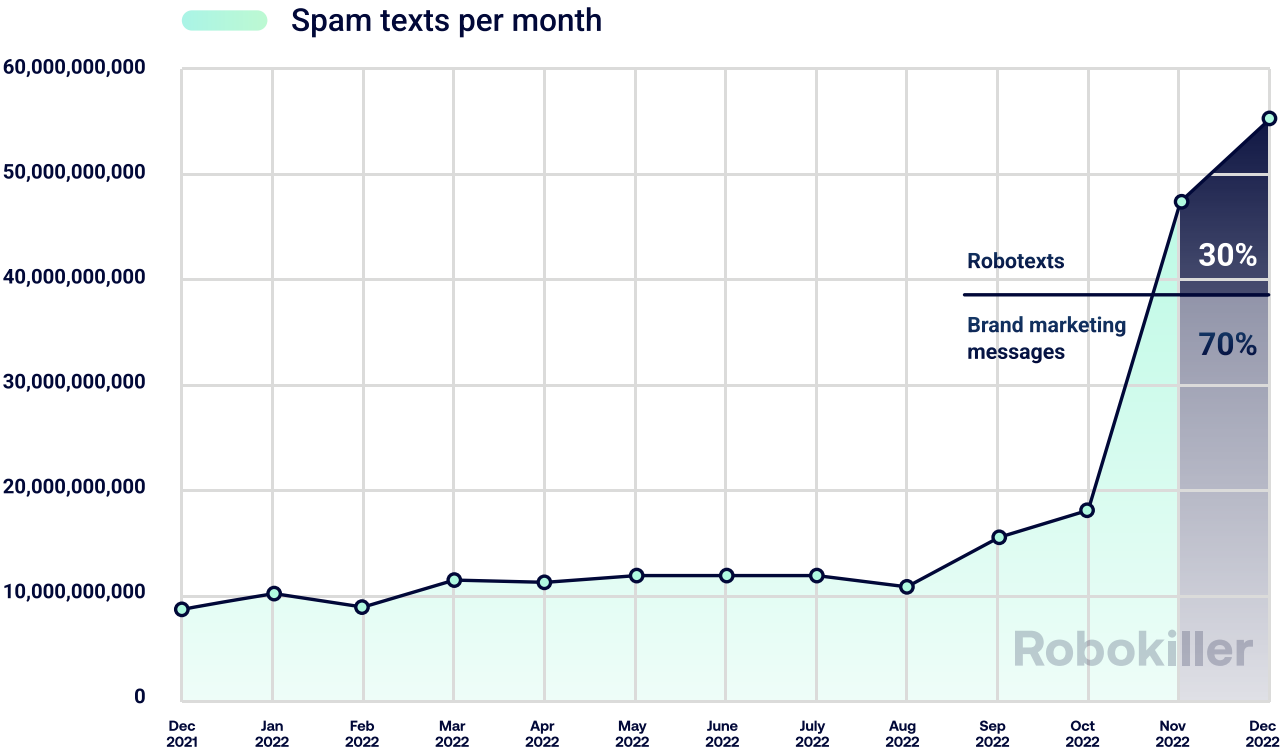
Scammers know this, so they're capitalizing while they can.

Another reason behind the shift is the fact scammers understand where to find people. They know we live in a text-first society and that by keeping up with social trends and events they can take advantage of people's vulnerabilities with compelling cons. Take delivery scams, for instance, which increased by 156% from October to November. Scammers targeted Americans with these scams, knowing Black Friday and holiday shopping was front and center.

Chances are, spam texts haven't peaked

Despite the efforts now underway to [mitigate spam texts](#), chances are Americans won't get a reprieve any time soon. If 2022 is any indicator, the problem is rapidly deteriorating. From March through December, Americans received at least 10 billion robotexts in every month. SMS totals exploded in November and December, peaking at 55 billion in the final month of the year.

Though November and December proved infamous, not all of the text messages sent in those months were scams. In fact, 70% were related to brand SMS marketing, as brands sought to drive sales around the holidays. Couple holiday shopping with midterm elections and it's no surprise November and December netted out at record highs.

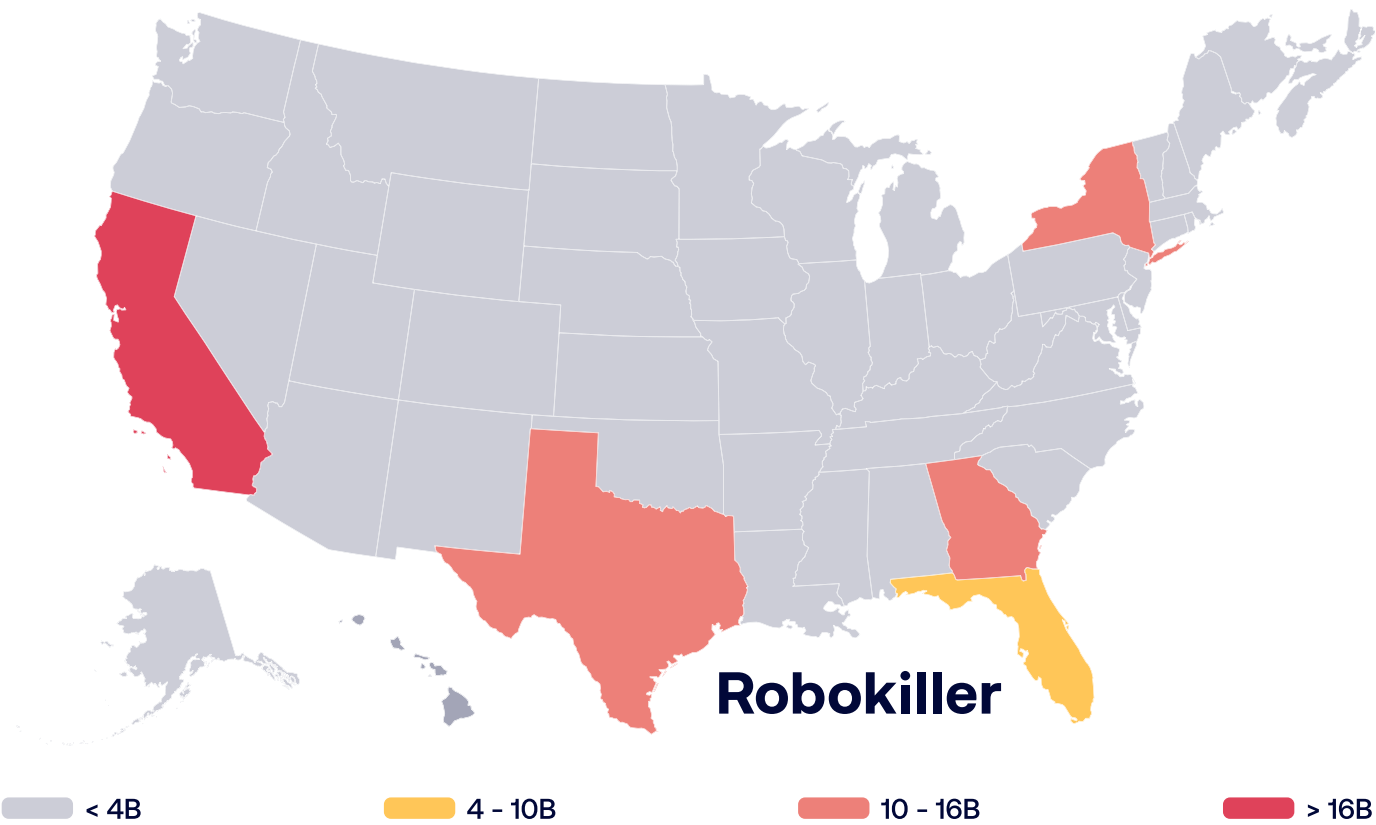


In our [2022 Mid-Year Report](#), Robokiller predicted robotexts would rise to 147 billion by year’s end. As mentioned above, Robokiller observed an influx of marketing-related messages in November and December, which our users marked as spam. When excluding brand marketing messages such as these, Americans would have received 157 billion robotexts, an overshoot from our projected total but not a significant one. The unexpected surge in brand marketing messages made the yearly total skyrocket.

When it comes to robotexts, the biggest states have it worst

It stands to reason that the states with the most people generally receive the most texts. California led the way in robotexts in 2022, followed by Texas, Georgia, New York, and Florida. Given these states generally receive the most robotexts year after year, it’s apparent that scammers have yet to refine their tactics to be more targeted.

2022 estimated spam texts by state

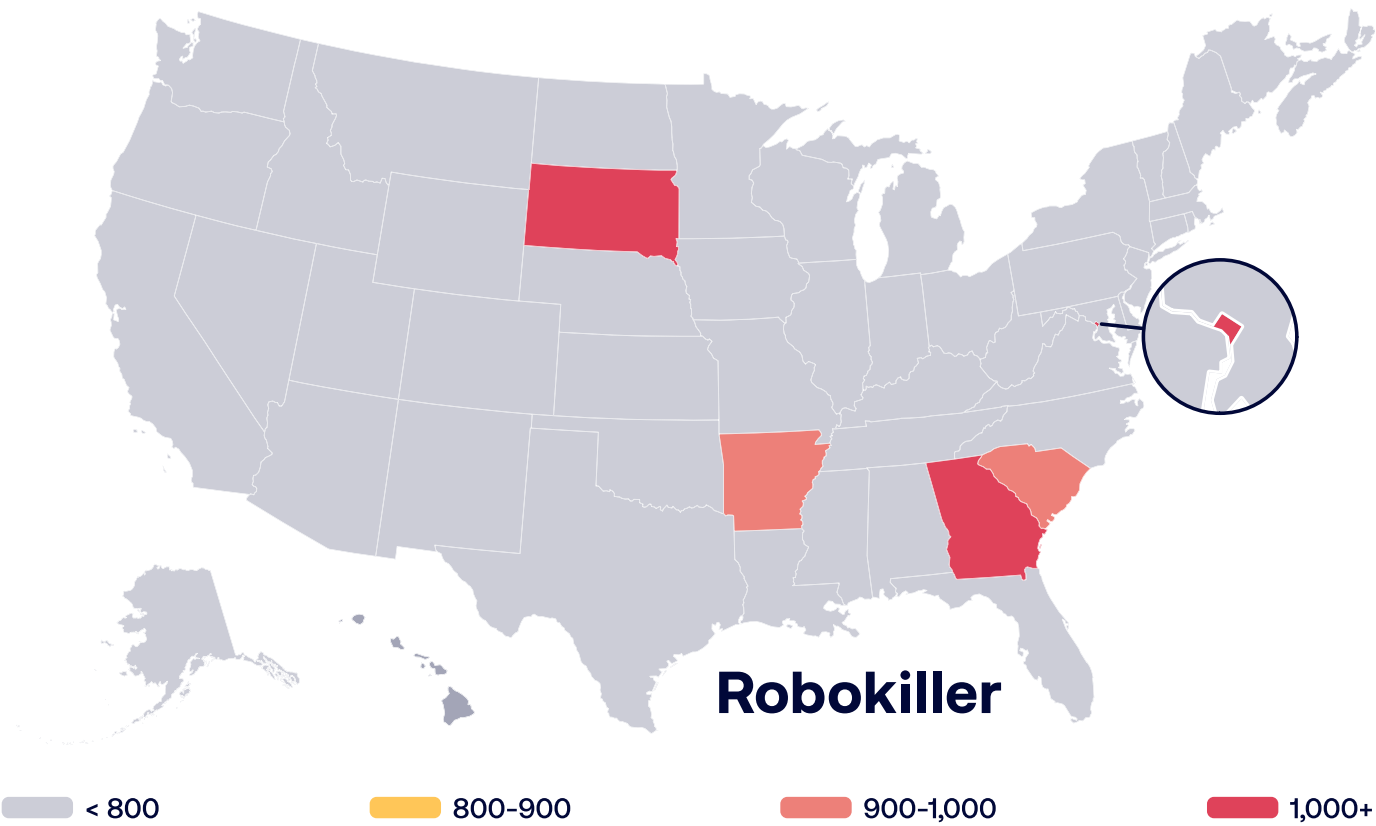


State	Estimated spam texts 2022
California	16,032,363,698
Texas	12,459,510,475
Georgia	12,194,816,314
New York	11,458,314,885
Florida	8,705,464,782

On a per capita basis, less populous states enter the fray

If you call Georgia, D.C., South Dakota, Arkansas, or South Carolina home, chances are you’ve received more spam texts than your friends and family elsewhere in the United States.

2022 estimated spam texts by state per capita

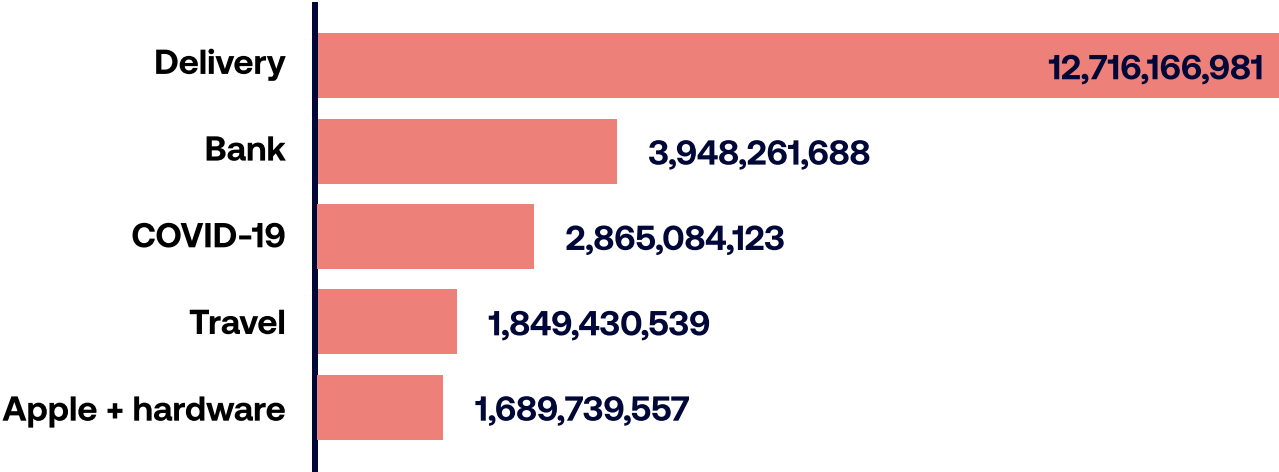


State	Estimated spam texts 2022	Estimated spam texts per person
Georgia	12,194,816,314	1,391
Washington D.C.	12,459,510,475	1,331
South Dakota	16,032,363,698	1,014
Arkansas	11,458,314,885	983
South Carolina	8,705,464,782	974

Scammers followed a familiar playbook in 2022

Delivery scams were the leading scam in 2022, just as they were a year ago. Interestingly, scammers relied on this scam less in 2022 (12 billion) than they did in 2021 (22 billion). That, coupled with the fact robotext scams more than doubled year-over-year, means delivery scams occupy a much smaller percentage of all scams this year (6%) than last (26%). This suggests scammers aren't so focused on any individual scam type. Instead, they're spreading their efforts around.

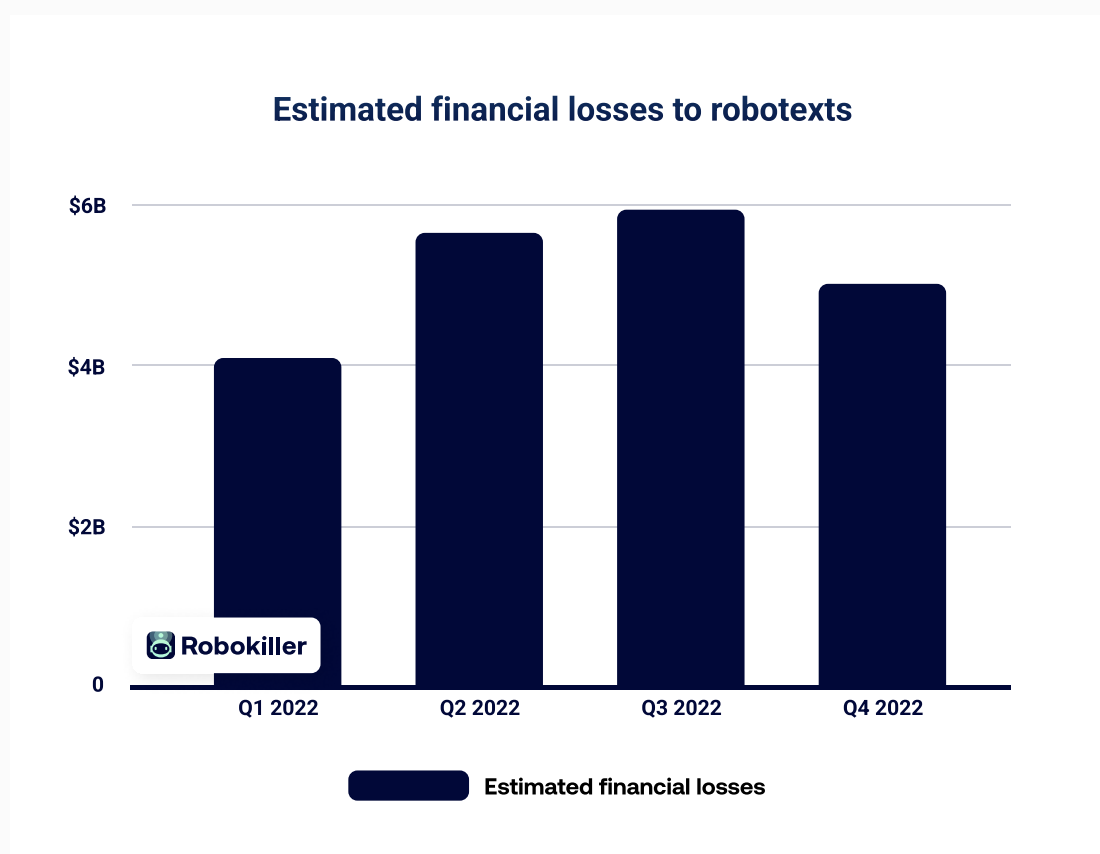
Estimated top robotext categories 2022



Also as was the case in 2021, COVID-19, bank, and Apple + hardware sweepstakes scams placed in the top five. In a deviation from 2021, travel scams entered the list in place of health care scams. This was likely a reflection of the fact people were more willing to travel in 2022, as [concerns over the spread of COVID-19 decreased](#), causing restrictions to ease in many locales.

Robotexts are proving costly

In a world that revolves around SMS, scammers have perfected this method of defrauding Americans. Sadly, it's paying off, as scammers stole a record \$20.6 billion in 2022, a 105% increase from 2021's then-record \$10 billion.



There's good news: You can eliminate text scams with Robokiller and Textkiller

Robokiller and Textkiller are on the front lines defending Americans against fraudulent SMS. With 99% effective protection against dangerous scams and unwanted text messages, you're safe from scams with our award-winning technology.



Robokiller

Download Robokiller on [iPhone](#) and [Android](#).

[Try Textkiller for free on iPhone.](#)



The state ^{of} the robocall in 2022



78+ billion
robocalls received by Americans in 2022

8%
year-over-year increase

43%
increase from 2020

\$65+ billion
estimated losses
to robocall scams in 2022

\$193+ million
call scam losses prevented
by Robokiller in 2022



Robocall growth slowed, but losses sped up

Robotexts may have zoomed past robocalls to become the number one nuisance on phones everywhere, but that doesn't mean robocalls have lost relevance. Scammers sent 78 billion robocalls in 2022, an 8% increase from a year ago, but a slow growth rate in comparison to 2021's 32% increase.

The slowed growth in robocalls can likely be correlated to the FCC's steadfast efforts to curb the problem in 2022 (more on that below). However, the scams that did make their way through are yielding increasingly significant returns. Americans lost \$65 billion to robocall scams in 2022, more than double 2021's \$30 billion. This suggests scammers are getting better at their craft, with a higher return per scam attempt. Data from the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) supports this conclusion, as [the average robocall scam now costs the victim \\$1,500](#), a significant increase from 2021's \$1,000.

Bottom line: Although robotexts are more prevalent, robocalls remain more dangerous on average.

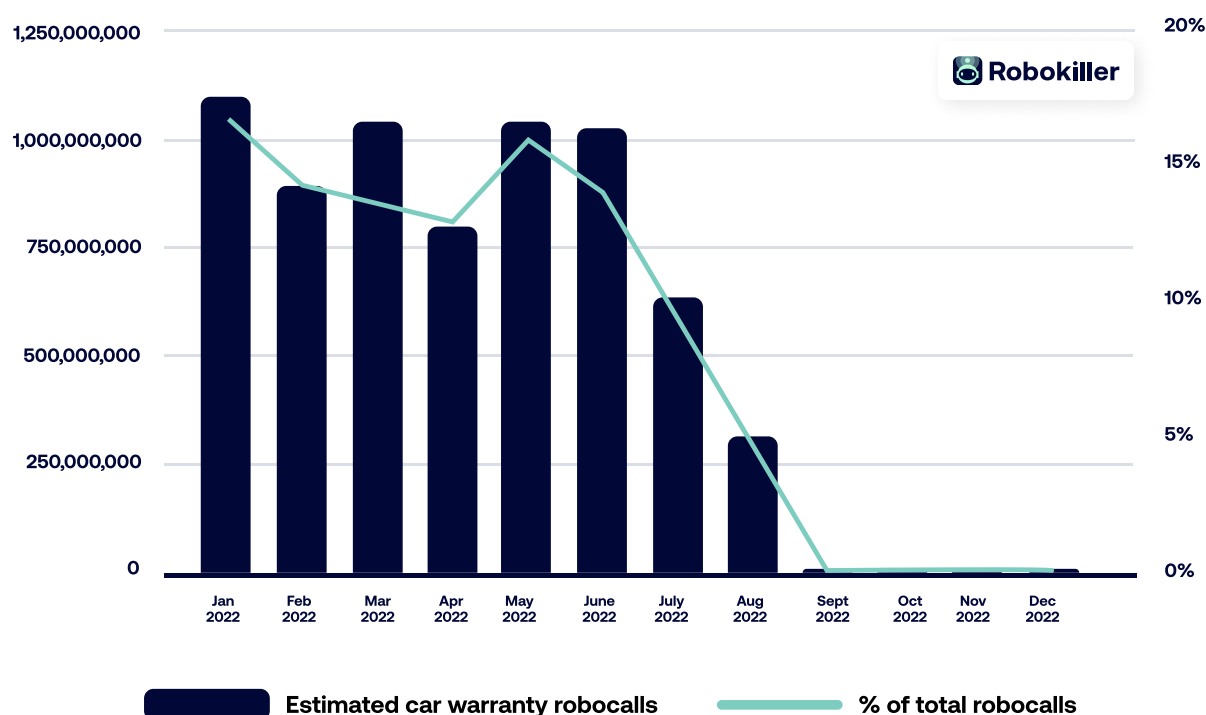
Robotext losses	2021	\$10,066,331,169
	2022	\$20,639,269,692
Robocall losses	2021	\$30,315,520,899
	2022	\$65,154,694,902

Government efforts to curb specific scams are paying off

In good news, government efforts to shut down some of the most insidious robocalls and the people behind them has made a significant impact.

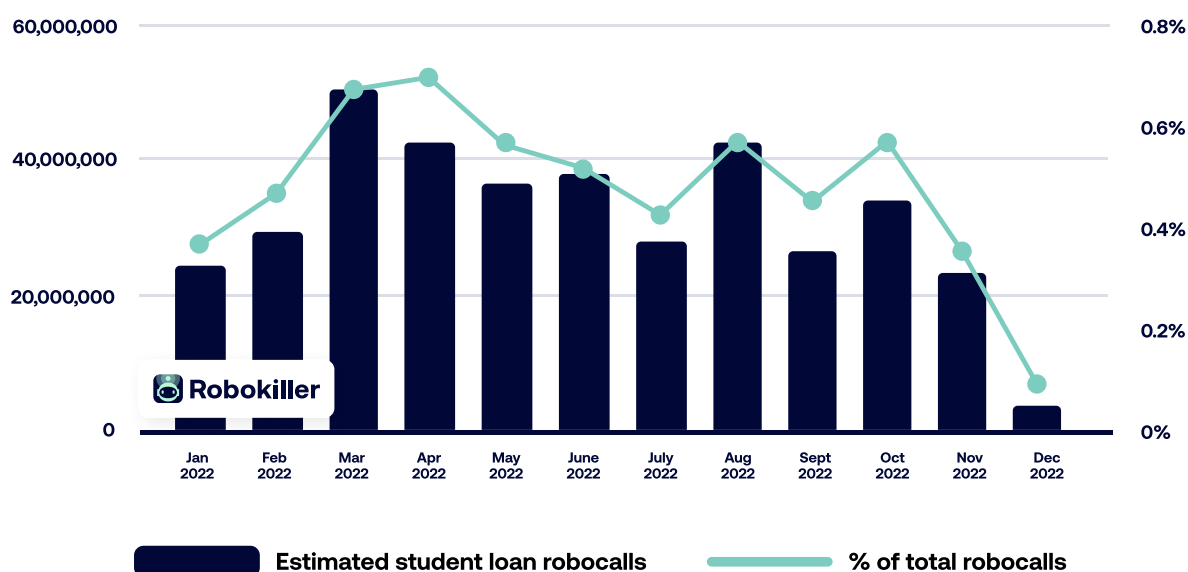
Car warranty calls, once the most infamous robocall, dropped from just shy of 1 billion in June 2022 to fewer than 7 million by September. That's because the FCC announced a series of steps to shut down these scams and hold responsible the bad actors behind them and the voice networks allowing the traffic.

Estimated car warranty robocalls 2022



Student loan scams, the fifth most common phone scam in 2021 **according to Robokiller, plummeted in December by 88%**, despite the fact debate over student loan forgiveness is front and center. This followed a public notice from the FCC that pinpointed a network responsible for allowing these calls to go through.

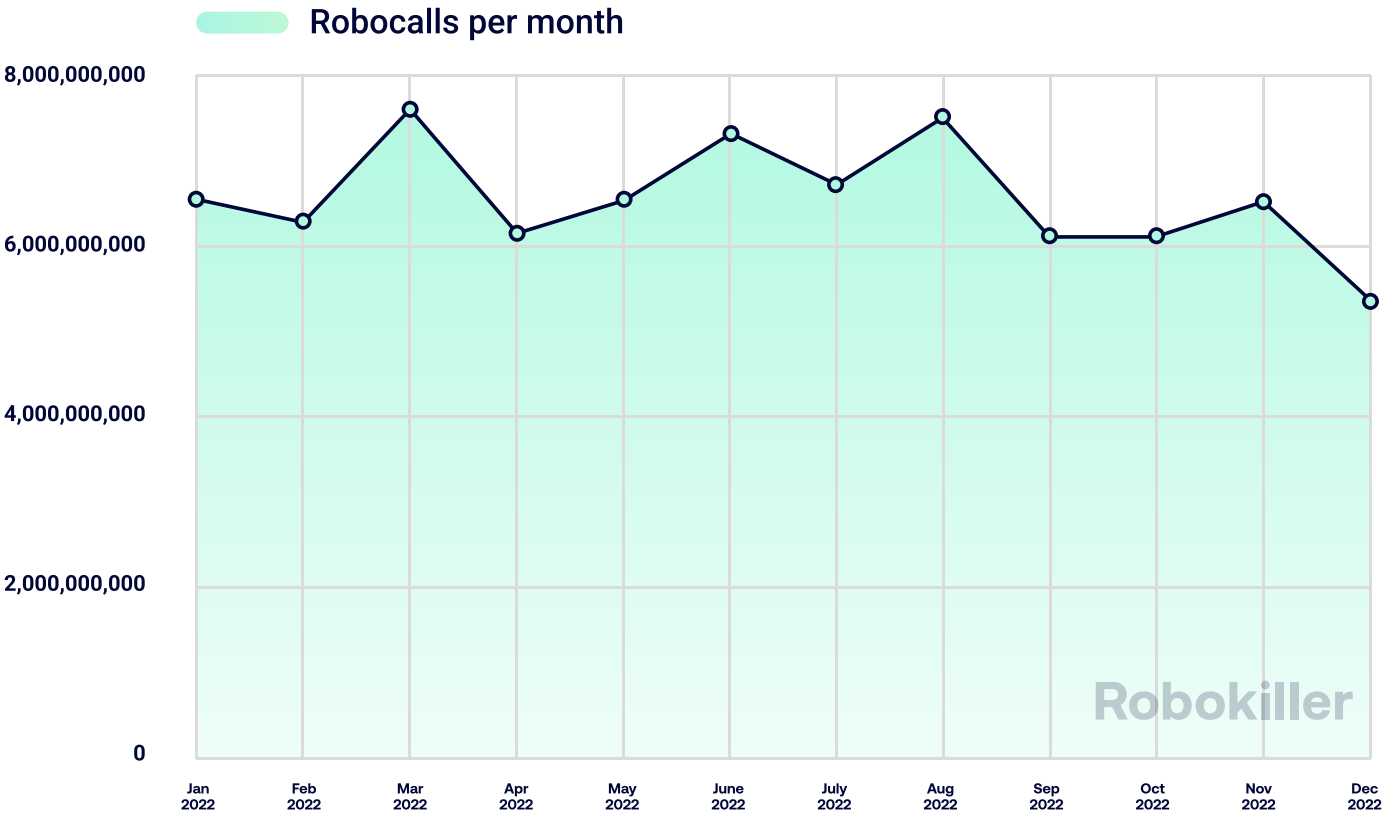
Estimated student loan robocalls 2022



Also, for the first time, the FCC **removed a phone carrier from the Robocall Mitigation Database**. Global UC had failed to address robocall scams, so the FCC shut off traffic to and from the network.

With the FCC in attack mode, chances are other prominent scams will plummet and the parties responsible for sending and allowing them will be held accountable.

Even so, robocalls are still prominent.



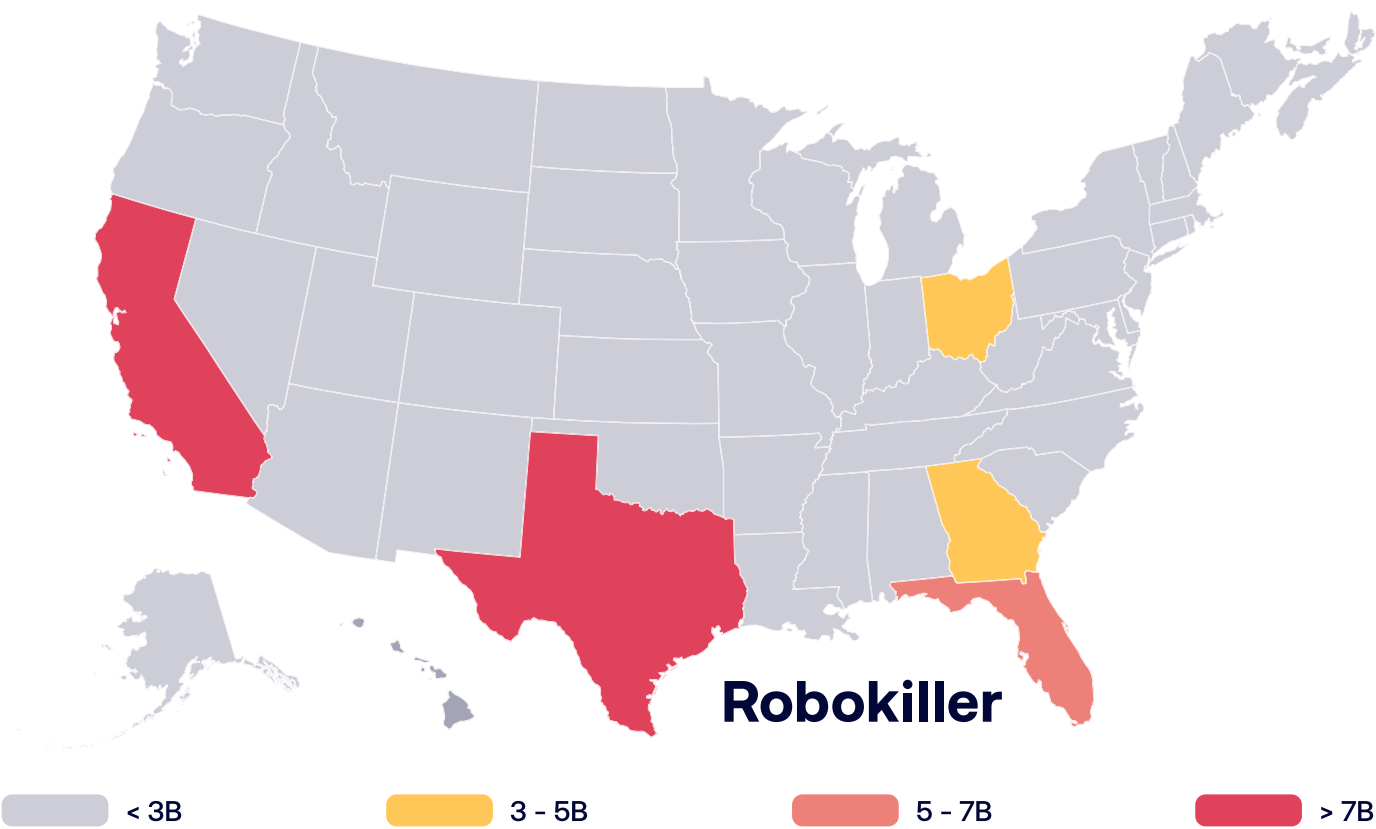
As one of the most trusted sources for national robocall trends, Robokiller continues to monitor and quantify the respective impact of the FCC and other organizations’ efforts to shut down targeted robocall scams to help continue the exciting momentum we’re seeing in this area.

Robokiller and [Robokiller Enterprise](#), which provides protection against scams for businesses, remain committed to eliminating robotexts and fully support government efforts to curb these scams. Together, we, along with the federal government and carriers, can work to eliminate this costly problem.

On the state level, likely culprits lead the way

Texas, California, Florida, Ohio, and Georgia were home to the most unwanted calls in 2022. With more than 9 billion robocalls, Texas surpassed the next closest state, California, by nearly 3 billion. Scammers continuously target the elderly to make a profit, so it’s no surprise these states are at the top of the list considering the high rate of retired Americans residing in them.

2022 estimated spam calls by state

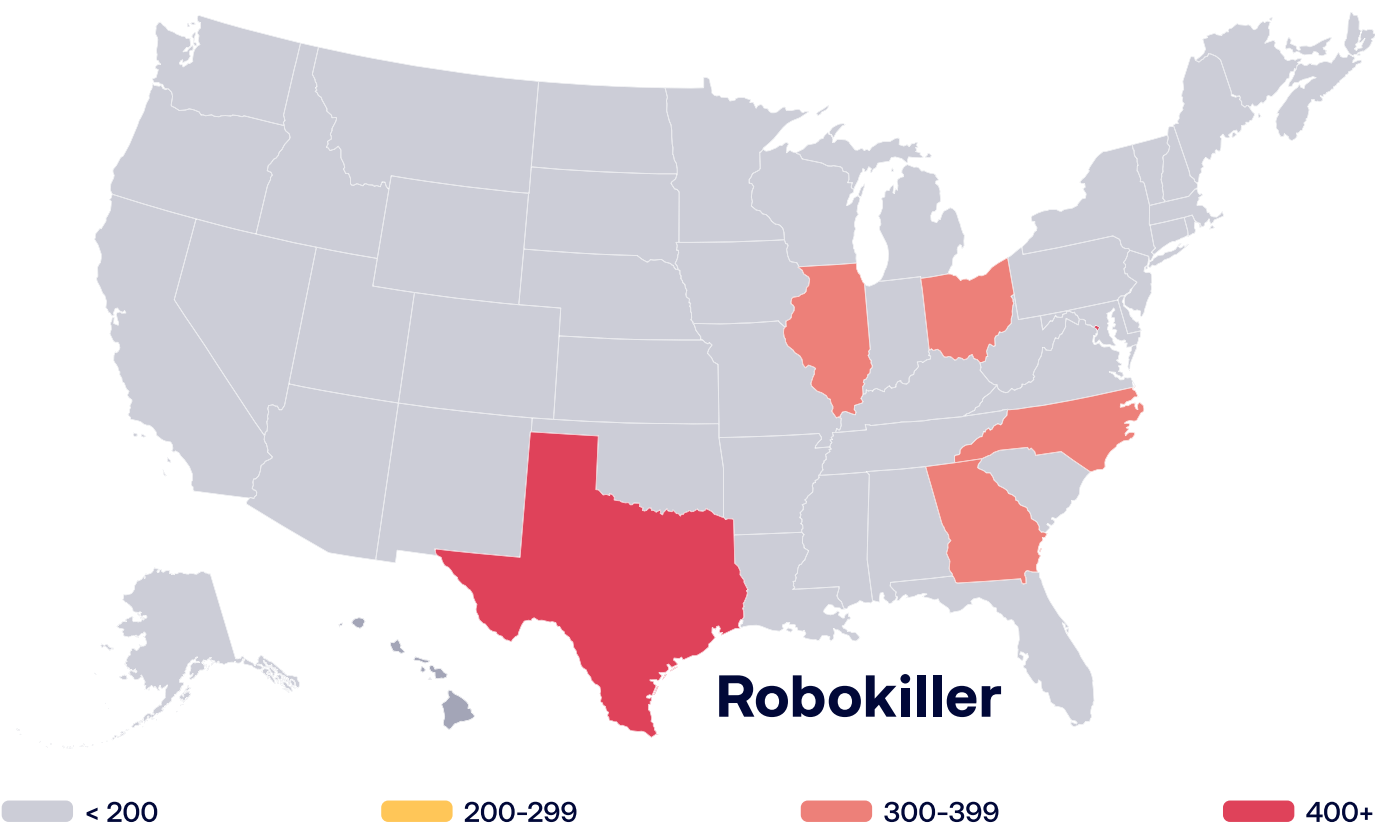


State	Estimated spam calls 2022
Texas	10,724,330,223
California	7,597,502,436
Florida	5,196,589,963
Ohio	3,474,806,178
Georgia	3,431,011,638

On a per capita basis, less populous states enter the fray

Last year, Arkansas (393) led the way on a per capita basis, and it once again challenged for the infamous top spot in 2022, falling just shy (445) of Texas (448). Notably, Georgia is the only state to appear in the top five on a per capita and overall volume basis.

2022 estimated spam called states per capita

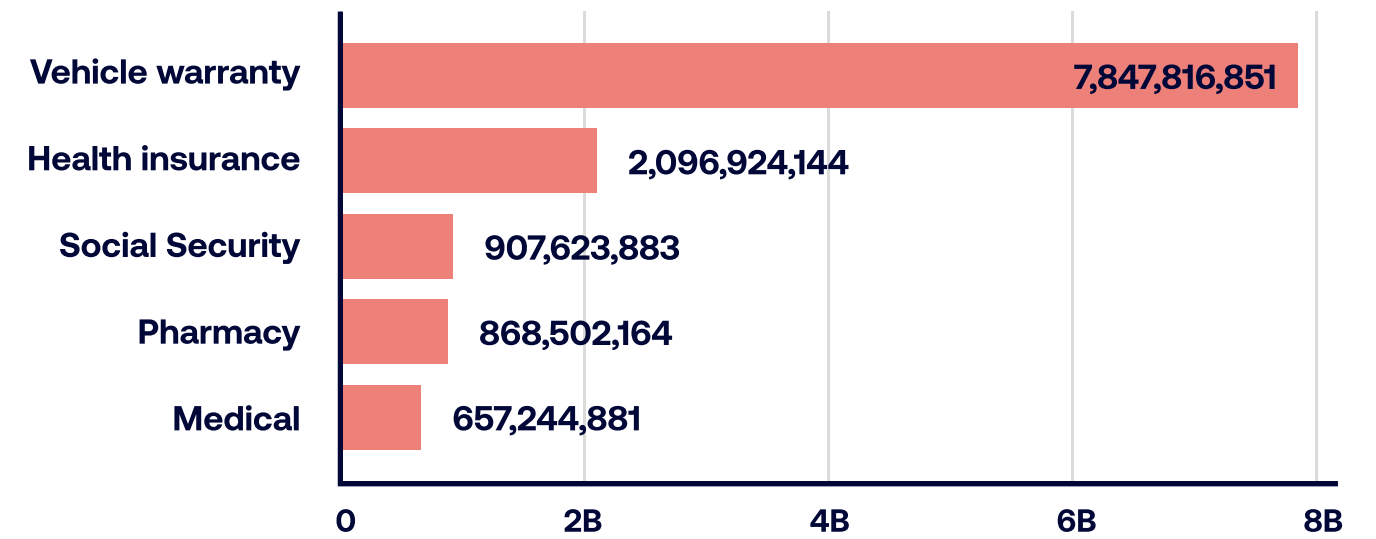


State	Estimated spam calls	Estimated spam calls per person
Texas	10,724,330,223	448
Georgia	3,431,011,638	391
Ohio	3,474,806,178	357
North Carolina	2,985,117,475	345
Illinois	3,196,787,638	301

Car warranty scams still lead the way, but they’re slowing down

Despite the FCC’s success in limiting car warranty robocalls in the second half of 2022, scammers did enough damage in the first half of the year to ensure this scam type would remain atop the list of infamy again in 2022. However, whereas last year car warranty calls accounted for 18% of all robocalls, this year they accounted for just 10% (including less than 1% of all robocalls in December). Overall, Americans received shy of 8 billion car warranty robocalls, a far cry from last year’s 13 billion and clear evidence that government efforts are making a rapid and significant impact.

Estimated top robocall categories 2022



Health insurance and Social Security scams placed in the top five most common scams, just as they did a year ago. Notably, pharmacy and medical scams entered the top five in place of student loan and religious scams, which is likely due to government efforts asking carriers to stop letting student loan scams through their network.

Phone scams

in 2023: What to watch for

Based on historical data, economic factors, and other trends, we expect to see the following play out in 2023.



Robotexts will once again surge

2023 is set to be another banner year for SMS scammers, as Robokiller predicts Americans will receive 50% more robotexts. Robocalls, on the other hand, will grow a modest 5%.



Some well-known robocalls will practically vanish

One reason we project robocalls to increase at a slower rate than robotexts is the fact the FCC has proven capable of shutting down dangerous call scams (like auto warranty and student loan scams in 2022). Expect the government to zero in on other harmful robocalls with great results in 2023.



The government will focus more on robotexts

Americans can expect the FCC to expand their focus to robotexts next. Keep in mind, SMS scams pose a unique challenge, so Robokiller doesn't anticipate a STIR/SHAKEN equivalent for spam texts in the immediate future. Nonetheless, the FCC's initiative is encouraging.

How to stop phone scams

Robotexts and robocalls remain a serious concern. Here are some steps you can take to stay safe.



Don't answer phone calls or texts from unknown numbers, especially those that call or text at odd hours.



Don't follow prompts like "Press 1" or click any links.



Never provide personal information like banking details or other sensitive information.



Download a spam text and call blocker like [Robokiller](#) to equip your phone with the latest technology to stop scams.

The Robokiller difference

**1+
billion**
scammers
blocked

**\$600+
million**
losses prevented to
scams

99.9%
accurate robocall
& robotext blocking

Eliminate spam with Robokiller

Regardless of what happens in terms of government regulations, carrier efforts to stop spam, and scammers seeking new and creative ways to steal, one thing is certain: **Robokiller keeps your phone scam-free.**

Robokiller's AI- and ML-powered technology silences scammers before they can reach you. With 99.9% effective robocall and robotext protection, you won't need 100% accurate scam radar of your own.

Take back control over your phone with Robokiller

Start your **FREE 7-day trial** today

