

**Opening Statement of Republican Leader  
Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Consumer Protection and Commerce  
Hearing on “Reauthorizing Brand USA and Safe Web”  
October 29, 2019**

*“As Prepared for Delivery”*

Good afternoon and welcome to the Consumer Protection and Commerce Subcommittee legislative hearing today on reauthorizing two important U.S. programs: Brand USA and the U.S. SAFE WEB Act.

Earlier this year, this subcommittee held an oversight hearing with the Federal Trade Commission where we focused much of our attention on data privacy and how we can come together in Congress to deliver a federal bill that provides uniform and strong consumer protections.

At that same hearing, the Commission impressed upon us the importance of the U.S. SAFE WEB Act and the need to extend it.

The Commissioners testified that it was key to the FTC’s international work--- and we agree. Today is the first step in extending this vital program.

I want to thank my good friend from Illinois, Ms. Robin Kelly, along with Mr. Bucshon and Chair Schakowsky, for joining me on this bill to extend the U.S SAFE WEB Act so that it doesn’t expire next September.

Our proposal extends the program to 2027 and requires additional reporting from the 2006 bill, so the FTC can report back on the critical work performed over the past decade.

Since its passage in 2006, and it’s reauthorization, this program has proven to be an important part of the Commission’s mission.

In our digital and connected world, the Internet and e-commerce know no borders, so it’s vital to provide tools for the Commission’s international work.

Thanks to the Internet, small companies like eTailz in Spokane Valley can now reach people and customers globally.

The Internet has also made life-changing innovations possible that have raised our standard of living and connected us with the world.

However, it's also presented new opportunities for criminals and bad actors.

There's spam, spyware, misleading claims, privacy violations, data security breaches, telemarketing fraud, and more.

To protect Americans, the FTC is our top cop on the beat---both here at home and abroad.

Thanks to the SAFE WEB Act, the Commission can work on cases with an international dimension.

Specifically, the Commission can share evidence and provide assistance to foreign authorities.

The Commission can also enter into enhanced enforcement cooperation with foreign counterparts through staff exchanges, international agreements, and other mechanisms.

And the program has been a resounding success.

Because of the SAFEWEB, the Commission has responded to more than 130 information sharing requests issued more than 115 civil investigative demands in more than 50 investigations on behalf of foreign agencies and secured settlements against companies that violated children's privacy online, engaged in sweepstakes scams, deception, and so much more.

The program has been crucial to securing the EU-US Privacy Shield, which was just extended by the EU Commission last week.

Because the Internet is borderless, this agreement safely and securely preserves the ability for U.S. companies to do business online in the EU by allowing trans-Atlantic data flows.

US SAFEWEB is a successful tool for the FTC to protect Americans from online threats from overseas. I'm glad we are extending it on a bipartisan basis.

I also want to thank Mr. Welch and Mr. Bilirakis for their efforts to reauthorize Brand USA. Brand USA is a vital program to attract foreign visitors to the US, at no cost to taxpayers.

Their focus on bringing tourism to areas like Eastern Washington is spurring economic growth and it's creating excitement around other parts of the country outside of big city gateways.

Thank you again to our witnesses for being with us today and I look forward to discussing these two important bills.

I yield back.