

Opening Remarks
Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Subcommittee on Innovation, Data, and Commerce Hearing:
“The Fiscal Year 2025 Federal Trade Commission Budget”
July 9, 2024

INTRO

Thank you, Chair Bilirakis for your leadership.

Chair Khan, we appreciate you testifying today, along with Commissioners Slaughter and Bedoya.

And welcome to the newest additions to the Commission, Commissioners Holyoak and Ferguson.

We appreciate all of you being here today and for your service.

FTC REGULAR ORDER

Chair Khan, the last time you were here I expressed my serious reservations over the court cases you have lost, and some of the priorities you have unilaterally undertaken without clear review and purpose.

I know you and the FTC staff have a tough job.

With what we have seen from Big Tech during my time on this Committee, I certainly have my own concerns over how they abuse their power and how best to hold them accountable in order to protect Americans.

I continue to be concerned that the FTC's court losses are degrading the agency's effectiveness at a critical time when we are trying to modernize the Commission's authority to better protect Americans online...

...something that will be a fixture of the FTC long after the tenure of you or your fellow commissioners.

The challenges we're working to address need strong bipartisan collaboration and consensus.

That has always been my goal with Ranking Member Pallone and it should be the goal at the FTC as well.

FTC MUST REMAIN INDEPENDENT

The FTC also must live up to its tradition of remaining independent from political influence.

Under this administration, we have seen time and again the FTC echoing the talking points of the White House.

Just last week, we saw President Biden blame higher costs for consumers on price gouging by companies, ignoring how his own policies have caused out of control inflation, leading to high costs across the board.

Meanwhile, this Subcommittee has been leading on several bipartisan solutions to address the root causes of increased costs by strengthening American supply chains and easing the barriers facing American businesses.

More can and must be done and we need the FTC to foster an environment that both protects consumers and allows businesses to grow and innovate.

Eliminating guardrails designed to prevent government overreach...

...like your removal of the longstanding phrase in the FTC mission statement “without unduly burdening legitimate business activity”...

...or violating due process laws and the intimidation of businesses...go against the FTC’s core mission as directed by Congress.

CONCLUSION

Chair Khan, the last time you appeared before us I asked you to convince us that the FTC’s core mission, to protect Americans, was not taking a backseat to the Biden administration’s radical agenda.

You were unable to do so.

I still remain committed to establishing the FTC as the preeminent data protection agency in the world, at the direction of Congress...

...but before that can happen critical guardrails must be established to prevent the agency from further abusing its power and making sure its transparent and accountable to the American people.

The FTC plays a critical role in protecting Americans, here at home and threats from abroad.

As you know, over a year ago I laid out the case directly to the CEO of TikTok for the harms that his company perpetrated against our national security, American liberties, and the privacy

and online safety of our kids. Had comprehensive data privacy and security legislation been in place, you would have had the tools to enforce against TikTok and other Big Tech for violating Americans' privacy rights

These are goals that I know we share, and I hope that we can work together to achieve them.

Thank you, I yield back.