

Statement of Subcommittee Ranking Member

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Subcommittee on Antitrust, Commercial and Administrative Law  
Hearing on Online Platforms and Market Power, Part 2:  
Innovation and Entrepreneurship

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Thank you, Chairman Cicilline.

Innovation and entrepreneurship are the hallmarks of the American economy. That has been true in the past and it remains true now in the digital age.

Today's hearing will focus primarily on the impacts large online platforms have on innovation and entrepreneurship. This is a critical topic, but I want to stress that we must take a fair and balanced approach to it.

There are some who advocate that the biggest platforms should just be broken up because they supposedly dominate too much of the market. That impulse seems misguided, for several reasons.

First, just because a business is big doesn't necessarily mean that it is bad. Antitrust laws focus on the conduct of companies and whether that conduct is anticompetitive. They do not exist to punish businesses just because they are big. Likewise, the antitrust laws do not exist to punish success. On the contrary, they exist to foster it. The most innovative, successful, and competitive companies often become very big—not through anti-competitive conduct, or violations of antitrust laws, but simply by providing a better service or product than the other companies in the marketplace.

Second, as the written statements offered by some of our witnesses attest, big online platforms can present small companies in many sectors with a better way to reach the most customers. Breaking up big businesses simply because they are large could end up hurting lots of small businesses throughout the country.

Third, breaking up big platforms won't necessarily solve a problem associated with those platforms. For example, privacy issues are prominent in today's discussions of what is going wrong online. But breaking up big platforms into smaller ones might actually compound the problem of protecting privacy.

I raise these points not to dismiss the idea that there might be genuine issues of anticompetitive conduct in the online

ecosystem. Instead, I want to offer a counter point to some of the more radical positions being articulated.

We should take a serious look at allegations of wrongdoing.

Perhaps we will hear some of these today. But we should not rush to amend the antitrust laws or break up companies based on false notions that being big is inherently bad or that everything a big company does should be presumed to be anticompetitive.

I yield back the rest of my time.

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