

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement
of
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce Chair Jan Schakowsky

Inclusion in Tech: How Diversity Benefits All Americans

Wednesday, March 6, 2019

Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

Good morning and thank you all for joining us today. Today, we are meeting to discuss an important issue, diversity in the tech workforce. As the presence of technology continues to play a larger and larger role in Americans' lives, the industry's workforce has remained largely homogenous. People of color, women, and older Americans have all been notably absent from the tech workforce.

This has real impacts on Americans – we have seen algorithmic bias impact sentencing guidelines, resulting in harsher sentences for minorities. We have seen soap dispensers fail to recognize the hands of African Americans and Latinos seeking to use the product to wash their hands. These may seem like two opposite sides of the spectrum, as far as harm, but they both clearly demonstrate that something is amiss.

Simply put, diverse voices are lacking in the tech workforce. It strikes me that unfair business practices and extreme market concentration in tech may in fact perpetuate the boys club that we are examining today. As previously stated, this lack of diversity in the workforce has real life impacts on consumers. I thank our panel for coming here to discuss this important issue.

With that, I yield to my Vice Chair from California, Mr. Cardenas, for one minute.

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