

October 19, 2023

Jessica Herron  
Legislative Clerk  
Subcommittee on Innovation, Data, and Commerce  
House Energy and Commerce Committee  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-6115

**RE: Deena Ghazarian's Responses to Additional Questions for the Record**

Dear Ms. Herron,

On behalf of Deena Ghazarian, I want to thank the Subcommittee for inviting her to appear before the September 20, 2023, Innovation, Data, and Commerce hearing entitled, "Mapping America's Supply Chains: Solutions to Unleash Innovation, Boost Economic Resilience, and Beat China."

Pursuant to the Rules of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, I am attaching her answers to the additional questions for the record, in the required format.

Thank you again for your help, and please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Tiffany M. Moore  
Senior Vice President  
Political and Industry Affairs  
Consumer Technology Association

## **Responses of Deena Ghazarian, Founder and CEO, Austere**

### Questions for the Record

House of Representatives Energy & Commerce Committee, Subcommittee on Innovation, Data, Commerce

“Mapping America’s Supply Chains: Solutions to Unleash Innovation, Boost Economic Resilience, and Beat China”

## **Responses of Deena Ghazarian, Founder and CEO, Austere**

### **The Honorable Jeff Duncan**

- 1. Since this subcommittee began working on the topic, I’ve heard a lot about voluntary standards, but want to ask you, as a small business owner, how would you feel about Commerce implementing voluntary standards to share information related to your supply chains, but those standards didn’t protect you from litigation or posed a risk to expose trade secrets?**

If Commerce were to implement voluntary standards to share information regarding supply chains without protecting me from litigation and posing a risk of exposing trade secrets or my competitive supply chain data and information, I would not feel comfortable sharing that data and information with Commerce.

- 2. How should voluntary public-private partnerships between the Department of Commerce and US firms work towards mapping supply chains? Should there be legally binding agreements on data protection and confidentiality that give legal recourse to companies that sign if their data is compromised?**

The most effective approach to supply chain mapping would involve public-private partnerships, enabling companies to share data voluntarily and confidentially. As part of any such program, the government should provide written and legally enforceable assurances of data protection along with legal recourse if the government does not adequately protect that data. Also, the Department of Commerce should prioritize specific supply chains for mapping, rather than trying to map every possible supply chain maintained by U.S. industry.

- 3. How would you feel if the US Department of Commerce required you to provide your supply chain data to map supply chains? Would you comply?**

The government should provide written and legally enforceable assurances of data protection along with legal recourse if the government does not adequately protect that data. Unless

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these protections were provided, for competitive and liability reasons, I would not feel comfortable with a Commerce requirement to provide my sensitive and competitive supply chain data.

- 4. In recent times, there have been highly publicized breaches within our mathematical encryption systems. These breaches have impacted well-known encryption methods such as AES, RSA, and even newer NIST Post-Quantum algorithms like SIKE and Crystals-Kiber. Considering these threats against our math-based encryption systems, what measures are we currently pursuing to investigate & adopt alternative approaches that guarantee security like quantum-secure, QuantaMorphic, physical-based data protection?**

I do not have the background and expertise to answer this question.

- 5. Winning the quantum race against Communist China is one of the greatest challenges of our time. Critical to winning this race is having a skilled American quantum workforce. Recently, the U.S. Department of Energy awarded a contract to Clemson University, a top R-1 national university, together with Winston-Salem State University, a respected HBCU to do just that. What can be done to build upon and replicate the Clemson-WSSU quantum workforce training model across the nation?**

I do not have the background and expertise to answer this question.

## **The Honorable Debbie Dingell**

**We must address supply chain vulnerabilities before they become full-blown crises. Ideally, we would have done so before crippling shortages of personal protective equipment impeded our ability to respond to the worst public health crisis in a century. Before the federal government had to invest tens of billions of dollars to rebuild our nation's capacity to produce semiconductors – critical computer chips instrumental to the production of automobiles, consumer electronics, and defense systems. Before other nations, including some adversarial nations, came to dominate the production of large-capacity electric batteries and threaten our automobile industry's innovative and manufacturing edge.**

**And while the federal government has a duty to protect supply chains instrumental to our national security and economic vitality, I believe that government intervention should be the option of last resort. The private sector should proactively identify and address supply chain risk, long before government assistance is needed.**

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**The Supply CHAINS Act, legislation that I'm proud to co-lead and which enjoys the support of over 160 stakeholders, includes my provision establishing voluntary standards and practices that the private sector can adopt to better identify and address supply chain risks before government intervention is necessary.**

- 1. Ms. Ghazarian, do you believe that such voluntary standards and practices could help improve our nation's supply chain resilience?**

Yes. However, the private sector should take the lead in developing those voluntary standards with government input. Private sector-led voluntary standards enable us to innovate quickly and outcompete other markets. I do not support the government developing these voluntary standards.