

March 21, 2025

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Energy
and Commerce

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Energy
and Commerce

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on
Commerce, Science, and
Transportation

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on
Commerce, Science, and
Transportation

Dear Chair Guthrie, Chair Cruz, Ranking Member Pallone, and Ranking Member Cantwell,

This week, President Donald Trump unlawfully attempted to terminate duly appointed and Senate-confirmed Commissioners Alvaro Bedoya and Rebecca Kelly Slaughter from their positions at the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), years before their terms would expire. This illegal action is a direct attack on the independence of an agency that has long served as a cornerstone of consumer protection and worked to create a fair playing field for all businesses in the United States.

The 25 undersigned public interest organizations are alarmed at the president's unlawful actions to dismantle the FTC's independence and impede commissioners' work on behalf of everyday Americans. We urge you to investigate these unlawful attempted firings and act swiftly to restore the FTC's independence, using all tools available to Congress. Additionally, President Trump's nomination of Mark Meador to serve as a commissioner at the agency should not advance until Commissioners Bedoya and Slaughter once again have full and permanent access to their Senate-confirmed positions.

The FTC plays a vital role in safeguarding American consumers, with a bipartisan history of protecting the public from harm, including elder fraud, children's privacy violations, and deceptive advertising. The Commission is also essential in maintaining fair competition, preventing monopolistic practices, and fostering a marketplace where innovation and consumer choice can thrive. Without an independent FTC, corporations would face fewer barriers to exploiting individuals through practices like intrusive data collection and AI-driven manipulation. In today's digital landscape, where personal information is increasingly at risk, the FTC's role in enforcing consumer protections has never been more critical.

To effectively carry out this work, Congress established the FTC as an independent agency. Congress and the U.S. Supreme Court have been clear that the president has no authority to fire FTC commissioners except in cases of inefficiency, neglect of duty, or malfeasance in office.¹ Policy disagreements or association with a political party that is not the president's own certainly do not meet that bar.

We would also note that President Trump himself originally nominated Commissioner Slaughter to the agency in 2018.²

Your committees play a critical role in helping ensure that the Commission performs its responsibilities effectively. The House of Representatives conducted extensive oversight of the FTC in the 118th Congress, including three committee hearings to receive oral testimony from former FTC Chair Lina Khan. We urge you to continue this active oversight, demand answers from FTC leadership, and use all tools available as members of Congress to reverse the president's destructive actions.

Sincerely,

AFT

Americans for Financial Reform Education Fund (AFREF)

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

Center for Democracy & Technology

Center for Digital Democracy

Center for Responsible Lending

Center for Science in the Public Interest

Check My Ads Institute

Consumer Action

Consumer Federation of America

Demand Progress

Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC)

Fight for the Future

Free Press

Muslim Advocates

National Association of Consumer Advocates

National Consumer Law Center

National Consumers League

¹ "Humphrey's Executor v. United States," *Supreme Court of the United States*, May 27, 1935.

<https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/ll/usrep/usrep295/usrep295602/usrep295602.pdf>

² "President Donald J. Trump Announces Intent to Nominate and Appoint Personnel to Key Administration Posts," *The White House*, March 26, 2018. <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/presidential-actions/president-donald-j-trump-announces-intent-nominate-appoint-personnel-key-administration-posts/>

New America's Open Technology Institute

Public Citizen

Public Knowledge

Tech Justice Law Project

Travelers United

Virginia Citizens Consumer Council

Workers Injury Law & Advocacy Group