

May 16, 2022

Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Kay Granger
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Mike Quigley
House Appropriation on Financial
Services & Government Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Steve Womack
House Appropriation on Financial Services &
Government Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Patrick Leahy
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Vice Chairman Richard Shelby
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Chairman Chris Van Hollen
Senate Appropriation on Financial
Services & Government Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Cindy Hyde-Smith
Senate Appropriation on Financial
Services & Government Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs DeLauro, Leahy, Quigley, and Van Hollen, Vice Chair Shelby, and Ranking Members Granger, Womack, and Hyde-Smith,

We are privacy, children's, and consumer advocates writing to strongly urge Congress to ensure that the Federal Trade Commission has the requisite budget to enforce the FTC Act and the 82 other statutes Congress has assigned to it. By legislative design, the FTC is the only independent federal agency tasked with protecting American consumers *and* promoting competitive markets across the economy. This is a critical mission made more difficult to accomplish by the increasing use of emerging technologies and the growing mismatch in resources between the FTC and regulated companies. We urge Congress to appropriate \$525 million for FY '23.¹

Emerging technologies have a growing presence in our daily lives—from the mundane ([ordering groceries for home delivery](#)) to the extraordinary (kids exploring the [metaverse](#)). Yet, such technologies have been deployed with few, if any, safeguards to Americans' privacy or security. Further, these technologies are controlled by a shrinking number of firms. In fact, a September 2021 [FTC study](#) revealed that from 2010 to 2019, the top 5 technology platforms conducted over 600 seemingly insignificant acquisitions, but combined resulted in substantially reduced competition. [Record profits](#) also allow companies to [agree to fines](#) as the [cost of doing business](#).

Protecting Americans against fraud is an essential responsibility of the FTC but it is not resourced to meet the challenge. From 2018 to 2021, fraud increased by over 265 percent resulting in [\\$5.9 billion in losses](#). During that same period, FTC conducted over 70 percent more premerger antitrust reviews (from [2,111](#) to [3,644](#)). Yet, the Commission's budget went from [\\$306 million to only \\$351 million](#), less than a 15% increase.² The FTC cannot protect consumers and promote competition without the necessary funds to carry out such important functions.

¹ This 40% increase from its current appropriation would help address the FTC's [chronic underfunding](#), which has resulted in the FTC bringing fewer cases, freezing pay and hiring, and shrinking its staff.

² [Critics of the \\$490 million funding request](#) wrongly calculate that it has been "an increase of more than 20% in the agency's budget in just the last three years."

We strongly urge you to ensure the agency has the resources it needs — at least \$525 million for FY '23 — to do its job. Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please contact Jolina Cuaresma at Common Sense (jcuaresma@commonsense.org).

Sincerely,

Common Sense
Accountable Tech
Center for Democracy and Technology
Center for Digital Democracy
Consumer Action
Consumer Federation of America
Demand Progress
Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC)
Fairplay
Fight for the Future
Media Alliance
National Consumers League
Privacy Rights Clearinghouse
Public Knowledge
U.S. PIRG