

27 April 2009

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

As representatives of leading consumer, privacy, and other public interest organizations, we respectfully urge you to appoint a new Commissioner of the Federal Trade Commission who will uphold that agency's mandate—too often ignored in the recent past—of “protecting America's consumers.” The new Commissioner should have a distinguished record of achievement in consumer affairs, with a demonstrated commitment to protecting the public from all manner of unfair, deceptive, fraudulent, and non-competitive monopolistic/oligopolistic business practices. Given the key role the FTC plays in protecting the public, especially children, in such crucial sectors as finance, health, privacy, and marketing, as well as competition, it is essential that your nominee have an unassailable record of supporting the interests of the public. Appointing a Commissioner with recent consulting or employment ties to the corporate sector would undermine consumer confidence in the agency.

Through your leadership, the FTC is off to a promising new start under Chairman Leibowitz. The Chairman's recent appointment of a new director of Bureau of Consumer Protection, a highly regarded legal scholar and advocate, reflects your Administration's commitment to better protect the interests of the public. We believe it is essential that the next commissioner be someone who can play a crucial leadership role and help forge a break from the FTC's lackluster recent past.

With online and mobile commerce representing a new and rapidly expanding marketplace, moreover, and one for which the basic ground rules of competition and marketing for the digital marketplace are still being formulated, we are particularly concerned that the new FTC commissioner also be committed to protect both consumer privacy and welfare with new media.

Cordially,

Berkeley Media Studies Group  
Center for Digital Democracy  
Center for Science in the Public Interest  
Electronic Frontier Foundation  
Electronic Privacy Information Center  
National Consumers League

Privacy Journal  
Privacy Rights Clearinghouse  
Privacy Times  
Public Health Institute  
U.S. Public Interest Research Groups  
World Privacy Forum