



April 20, 2021

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chair
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Cantwell and Ranking Member Wicker:

Internet Association (IA) welcomes the opportunity to submit this letter for the record as a part of the Senate Commerce Committee's April 20, 2021 hearing, "*Strengthening the Federal Trade Commission Authority to Protect Consumers.*"

IA is the only trade association that exclusively represents global internet companies on matters of public policy. Our mission is to foster innovation, promote economic growth, and empower people through the free and open internet. We believe the internet creates unprecedented benefits for society and the economy and, as the voice of the world's leading internet companies, IA works to ensure legislators, consumers, and other stakeholders understand these benefits.

We appreciate the Committee holding this hearing to revitalize the conversation around the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) statutory authority to provide consumers with adequate redress when harmed. IA member companies believe that it is time for Congress to enact a comprehensive consumer privacy law to empower the FTC, with clear rules and statutory enforcement tools, to engage in impactful privacy protections for consumers across the U.S.

IA members encourage Congress to swiftly and thoughtfully enact a modern U.S. privacy framework that provides individuals control over their data across all industries and organizations, holds companies and organizations accountable, and includes purposeful FTC statutory authority and clear enforcement provisions. A national privacy standard will provide rights and protections



for individuals and their data, regardless of where they reside, and establish much needed clarity so they can exercise their rights. It will also create clear guidance for businesses and organizations that process personal data, which in turn makes robust compliance easier and more affordable, rather than navigating a patchwork of state privacy laws, conflicting obligations, and uncertainty as to what is required next.

Over the last six months, twenty-four states¹ have introduced one or more versions of a consumer privacy framework for their state. While only California, Nevada, and Virginia have passed a privacy law over the past three years, many state legislatures are still in session and there is still the possibility for more states to adopt consumer privacy laws. As a result, the privacy landscape will become even more complex and overwhelming for businesses to comply with and consumers will not be able to attain a consistent level of privacy protections throughout the United States. While IA members understand that Congress has been focused on getting Americans through a challenging period in our nation's history, a key part of the country's recovery and future includes a comprehensive federal privacy law.

A U.S. privacy framework should prioritize protecting individuals' personal information and fostering trust through meaningful transparency and control. This can be accomplished by empowering people to better understand and manage how their personal information is shared, collected, used, and protected. People should also be able to access, correct, move, and delete their personal information, absent a legitimate need or legal obligation for a business or organization to maintain it. They should also be able to rely on a reputable and experienced government consumer protection agency like the FTC to lead enforcement actions that protect consumers' privacy rights as outlined in IA's [Privacy Principles for a Modern National Regulatory Framework](#). As IA members continue to see different draft privacy legislation at the state and federal levels, it is evident that there is more agreement from stakeholders on issues like strong consumer rights, accountability measures for companies, and data security requirements, than those few elements that divide us. Ultimately, that is why we would like to see this Committee take a leadership role in resolving these final few concerns, so that Congress can introduce and pass privacy legislation that President Biden can sign into law this year.

IA and our member companies stand ready to work with this Committee and all other interested parties on a unified approach to protecting all Americans' privacy, empowering consumers, creating

¹ Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia.



effective enforcement mechanisms through the FTC, and fostering technological innovation and economic growth within the United States.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. Dane Snowden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

K. Dane Snowden