

March 9, 2009

Chairman Jon Leibowitz
Federal Trade Commission
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20580

Dear Chairman Leibowitz:

The undersigned representatives of leading consumer, privacy, and other public interest organizations respectfully urge you to appoint a new Director of Consumer Protection. The director should have a track record as a genuine champion of consumer rights, someone whose experience reflects not simply a broad familiarity with industry procedures in the area of consumer relations, but a deep commitment to proactively protecting the public from all manner of unfair, deceptive, and fraudulent practices.

We believe it is especially important that the new Director be someone who has demonstrated throughout his or her career both knowledge of and commitment to consumer protection. As you know, the mandate of the Bureau of Consumer Protection is extraordinarily broad, covering everything from advertising and marketing practices to financial services to privacy and identity protection. All those areas of concern have taken on new importance in the rapidly expanding digital marketplace, where the traditional assurances of security and trust that consumers have come to expect from bricks-and-mortar establishments often do not exist online.

President Obama has made clear that American consumers deserve effective regulatory oversight of businesses, reversing the absence of federal vigilance over crucial sectors of the marketplace that affect the public's welfare. The position of Director of Consumer Protection is one of such profound importance to consumers that the American public can ill-afford any unnecessary delays in appointing a suitable candidate to fill the position.

We also congratulate you on your nomination by President Obama as the new chair of the FTC.

Cordially,

Jeff Chester, Center for Digital Democracy
Michael Jacobson, Center for Science in the Public Interest
Ellen Bloom, Consumers Union
Lillie Coney, Electronic Privacy Information Center
Evan Hendricks, Privacy Times
Melissa Ngo, Privacy Lives
Ed Mierzwinski, U.S. Public Interest Research Group