

Secretary Gina Raimondo
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, D.C.
20230

CC:
Senator Amy Klobuchar
425 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C.
20510

Congressman David Cicilline
2233 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C.
20515

March 9, 2022

Dear Secretary Raimondo,

We write to express our concern and frustration. Recent reporting revealed that your office is actively lobbying against Big Tech regulation in the European Union and, in so doing, undermining the Biden administration's economic and foreign policy goals. We urge you to end your now well-established pattern of carrying Big Tech's water across the Atlantic.

The Biden administration has been clear from the beginning: foreign policy is domestic policy, and domestic policy is foreign policy. As National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said, "the work we do abroad has to connect to making the lives of working people better, fairer, [and] safer."¹ At home, President Biden has fought to make the lives of working people better by committing to "full and aggressive enforcement of our antitrust laws" and calling for an end to "abusive actions by monopolies", including despicable price gouging that leaves too many working people struggling to make ends meet.² Abroad, President Biden has reinvigorated American alliances and returned us to an American "foreign policy for the middle class." Unfortunately, your recent conduct undercuts the President's foreign and domestic policy, frays our alliances, and resumes a discredited foreign policy for the Chamber of Commerce that benefits the few at the expense of the many.

The European Commission's sensible proposals, the Digital Markets Act (DMA) and the Digital Services Act (DSA), lay down rules of the road for the Wild West of the digital economy. Together, these proposals block anti-competitive conduct by dominant monopolies and establish protections

¹ Both quotes from here:

<https://www.npr.org/sections/biden-transition-updates/2020/12/30/951280373/why-bidens-national-security-adviser-plans-to-focus-on-the-u-s-middle-class>

² The White House, *Remarks by President Biden At Signing of An Executive Order Promoting Competition in the American Economy* (July 9, 2021),

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/07/09/remarks-by-president-biden-at-signing-of-an-executive-order-promoting-competition-in-the-american-economy/>.

for internet users and consumers alike.³ Both the DMA and the DSA complement President Biden's competition and anti-monopoly policy, as well as recent legislative efforts led by Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Congressman David Cicilline (D-RI).⁴ Despite this alignment between President Biden, Democratic leaders, and our European allies, your office has continually served as a mouthpiece for Big Tech in Brussels. On February 7th, the Financial Times reported that a senior member of your staff, Arun Venkataraman, wrote a letter to a "key Brussels powerbroker", Andreas Schwab, objecting to the DMA's focus on American technology companies and its alleged lack of consideration for security and intellectual property. As the FT noted, these objections are not only inaccurate but also closely reflect talking points of Big Tech firms like Apple.⁵ Schwab himself emphasized that it appears your office "artificially created" these objections to "hide behind" while actively doing Big Tech's bidding. All told, this letter and your office's repeated and sustained criticism of the DMA over the past two months suggest that, as a public servant, you are solely concerned with Big Tech's bottom line.⁶

This incident is not the first time your coziness with Big Tech or undercutting of U.S. and European competition policy has been called into question. Your flagrant lack of transparency about when and how often you meet with representatives of Big Tech prompted renewed calls for full release of your calendar less than two weeks ago.⁷ More specifically, your December criticism of the Digital Markets Act pushed Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and numerous American businesses and consumer groups to question your commitment to President Biden's domestic and foreign policy agenda.⁸

Enough is enough. As Commerce Secretary, your job is to serve the American people and President Biden, not Big Tech. It is past time you stopped echoing Big Tech talking points and instead stood up for the American worker and the American middle class.

Sincerely,

American Economic Liberties Project
American Family Voices
Blue Future
Demand Progress
Fight for the Future
The Freedom BLOC
Institute for Local Self-Reliance

³ Clothilde Goujard and Samuel Stolton, *Europe reigns in Big Tech: what you need to know*, POLITICO (Nov. 25, 2021), <https://www.politico.eu/article/europe-digital-markets-act-dma-digital-services-act-dsa-regulation-platforms-google-amazon-facebook-apple-microsoft/>.

⁴ The White House, *Executive Order on Promoting Competition in the American Economy* (July 9, 2021), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/07/09/executive-order-on-promoting-competition-in-the-american-economy/>.

⁵ <https://www.ft.com/content/c7a0d74c-9a10-4f5c-a381-2e60d3ea5a1f>

⁶ <https://www.politico.eu/article/us-government-in-bid-to-change-eu-digital-markets-act/>

⁷ <https://therevolvingdoorproject.org/coalition-calls-on-secretary-raimondo-to-release-calendars/>

⁸

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/12/15/bidens-commerce-chief-is-under-fire-warren-progressives-defending-us-tech-giants/>

The Juggernaut Project
The Other 98%
Our Revolution
Presente.org
Progress America
Public Citizen
Revolving Door Project
Social Security Works
TakeItBack.org
UltraViolet
The Utility Reform Network
X-Lab