



November 11, 2021

Senator Maria Cantwell
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20510

Senator Roger Wicker
555 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20510

Chair Cantwell and Ranking Member Wicker:

New America's Open Technology Institute strongly supports Alvaro Bedoya's nomination to the Federal Trade Commission and we urge the Senate Commerce Committee to quickly advance his confirmation. He is an accomplished leader with a record of excellence that makes him the perfect fit for this agency.

First, Professor Bedoya knows how to build institutions that serve the public interest. A decade ago, he stood up the Senate Subcommittee on Privacy, Technology, and the Law, serving as its first chief counsel and establishing a deeply-needed forum for technology debates on Capitol Hill. In 2012, he organized the first Congressional hearing on nascent facial recognition systems, putting the subcommittee at the leading edge of technology policy. In 2014, he founded the Center on Privacy and Technology at Georgetown University, which quickly became a national leader in scholarship and policy impact under his leadership. His understanding of what it takes to develop successful institutions would be a valuable asset at the FTC, particularly as the agency is poised to grow in the coming years.

Professor Bedoya is a pathbreaking scholar whose work has elevated the public discourse. His research on facial recognition bias prompted the House Oversight Committee to hold a series of hearings at which then-Chairman Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) called him "a great mind." His *Privacy as Civil Right* lecture has been widely recognized

as the leading treatise on the subject and was published in the nation's foremost privacy casebook. When today's law students learn privacy law, they read Alvaro Bedoya.

Professor Bedoya also gets results. He has an impressive record of reaching across the aisle to achieve policy reforms. As a Senate staffer, he worked with Senator Grassley's office to crack down on mobile phone "stalking apps" that abuse geolocation data, which led to the first federal prosecution of a stalking app developer. He also worked with Senator Heller's office to enact bipartisan reforms of government surveillance programs. At Georgetown, he co-led an effort that convinced Google to ban advertising from predatory payday loan companies. These skills would serve him well at the FTC.

Notably, none of our consumer protection agencies – encompassing ten Senate-confirmed leaders at the FTC, the Federal Communications Commission, and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau – have Latino representation. It's time for that to change. Professor Bedoya is a naturalized immigrant who was born in Peru and moved to the U.S. at the age of 5. His confirmation would break barriers and help the federal government better reflect the people it serves.

Next week's hearing comes at a critical juncture for the FTC, as the agency confronts a growing array of urgent consumer harms amid a commissioner vacancy. The FTC needs to be at full capacity with a commissioner who can hit the ground running. Professor Bedoya more than meets this moment. His expertise and dedication to the public interest are precisely what the American people need in an FTC commissioner. The Senate should confirm him without delay.

Sincerely,

Joshua Stager
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Washington, DC 20005

CC: Senate Majority Leader Schumer
Senate Minority Leader McConnell
Members of the Senate Commerce Committee