

Statement of Terrell McSweeney
Nominee for Commissioner, Federal Trade Commission
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
September 18, 2013

Chairman Rockefeller, Ranking Member Thune and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear today.

This is a special moment for me not just because I've served in the Senate as staff but because the Senate is where I first got a taste for public service as a 16-year-old Senate page. It was amazing to watch first-hand the giants of the Senate – public servants like Senator Dole and Senator Byrd – work together to do what's best for the country. It's a lesson that has inspired me ever since – and a sense of purpose that I hope to bring to the FTC, if I am confirmed.

If I may, I also wish to thank my family for being here today: my husband, Ralph Burns, my children Warren and Madeleine, my parents, Bill and Dorothy McSweeney, my sister Kate, and my in-laws Dick and Ruby Burns. I am grateful for their love and support.

During these recent weeks, I was privileged to meet with a number of Senators and their staffs and I thank you for the opportunity to exchange views. Those meetings reinforced to me that the mission of the FTC – protecting consumers and keeping the marketplace free from fraudulent, deceptive, and anticompetitive conduct – is not a partisan one. Indeed, one of its greatest strengths is its bipartisanship. I'm honored that Commission Chairwoman Ramirez and Commissioner Ohlhausen are also here today. And I'm grateful both to them, and to Commissioners Wright and Brill, for their insights. Each of them has been generous with their time. If I'm confirmed, I hope to continue the tradition of collegiality and consensus-oriented decision making that has been a hallmark of the FTC.

It's a tradition that is marking its 100th anniversary next year. Since Congress passed the Federal Trade Commission Act in 1914, much has changed in our economy and our country. One could only imagine what Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson would make of smartphones – much less the apps on them. And as the country has changed, so has the agency. But the core mission has not: enforcing the laws that protect consumers and promote competition, making sure that markets are free and fair, vital and dynamic. Our economy, built on a free and fair market, is what has powered the growth of the United States these past hundred years – and will for the next hundred years. It's what has allowed us to build a strong middle class and deliver the economic security of consumers.

Over my career, here in the Senate, at the White House, and at the Department of Justice, the economic security of the middle class has been my focus. And I have appreciated how the FTC has worked closely with Congress to contribute to the well-being of America's families.

The benefit to consumers from competition and protection from deception and fraud are well established. Competition leads to better prices, more and better choices, and innovation. Stopping fraudulent and predatory practices ensures that the playing field isn't tilted against consumers.

In particular, I believe the FTC's work protecting those that are most targeted by scams or deception – such as seniors, veterans, children, the financially distressed – is important. My work shows a commitment to these issues and I will continue to work on them at the Commission, if I am confirmed.

It is an honor and a privilege to be considered for the position of Federal Trade Commissioner. I look forward to answering your questions. Thank you.