

Statement of Joseph Simons
Nominee, Federal Trade Commission
February 14, 2018

Chairman Thune, Ranking Member Nelson, and distinguished members of the Commerce Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. It is, truly, an honor to appear before you, and especially regarding this nomination.

The Federal Trade Commission is an institution very close to my heart. The Commission has a great mission, it deals with fascinating and important issues, and it has a terrific staff. I've spent the greater part of my career working on the issues at the core of its mission, witnessing first-hand the tremendous impact the Commission can have and the enormous good that it can do. As I've mentioned to a few of you, in some ways it feels like I've spent my entire professional life preparing for this opportunity. As a much younger lawyer back in the 1980s, I worked at the agency as an assistant to the Director of the Bureau of Competition, among other jobs in Bureau. A little over a decade later, I returned to the FTC to run the Bureau of Competition. And while in private practice, I have for many years represented clients before the FTC and Department of Justice Antitrust Division. Throughout all that time, I never gave much thought to the possibility that I might one day find myself before this Committee as a nominee to lead the Commission. But personally, I cannot imagine a greater professional honor.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the support of family and friends, some of whom are here with me today. First and foremost, I definitely would not be here today without the love and support of my lovely wife Martha. Also here with me today are my children Sam, Jack and Lauren, and my stepchildren Jaxson, Michelle, and Lauren. Several of our close friends are here as well. I can't thank them all enough for their support.

The Federal Trade Commission is a proud and respected institution in Washington. Since its creation a little over a 100 years ago, its work has proven critical to increasing the growth of our economy. The free enterprise system works best when our markets remain free and competitive. By vigorously policing anticompetitive conduct, and preventing anticompetitive consolidation, the Commission can help ensure that firms compete on the merits, providing better products and services to consumers at lower prices. Likewise, by stamping out unfair or deceptive trade practices, the Commission can help assure that consumers are protected and have the information they need to make intelligent choices in the marketplace. The FTC is all about protecting and improving consumer welfare.

And one of the great things about this mission historically is that it has been performed in a highly bipartisan way.

I pledge to you today that if honored with confirmation, I will continue to lead the FTC in that rich tradition of bipartisan policymaking and enforcement. I look forward to working alongside my fellow Commissioners, of both parties, to assure the FTC remains as effective in the start of its second century as it did up through the end of its first century.

Where the agency already has the necessary tools to protect consumers, you have my assurance they will vigorously be brought to bear. And where a new approach may be needed, I'll be eager to work with this Committee and its staff in finding a solution.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify, and I look forward to your questions. I'm humbled by the nomination, and, if honored with confirmation, excited for the work ahead. Thank you.