

**Opening Statement of Alvaro M. Bedoya
Nominee to the Federal Trade Commission**

Thank you, Madam Chair, Ranking Member Wicker, members of the Committee. I want to thank President Biden for the trust he has placed in me. I want to thank Chair Khan and Commissioners Slaughter, Phillips, and Wilson, for joining me today.

I want to thank my family. With me here today are my wife, Dr. Sima Zadeh Bedoya, a psychologist who counsels kids at the National Cancer Institute at the NIH, my mother, who teaches community college in Richmond, along with our dear friends Tom Olson and Thomas Dotstry. I also want to thank our families watching online, especially my mother- and father-in-law in Louisiana, my brother and sister-in-law in Virginia, and my dad who is watching from Peru.

Finally, I want to tell my daughter Liyana and my son Kian, who may or may not be watching from home, that I love them.

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I've been working on privacy and consumer protection for the last dozen years. But for me, my work really began in May 2011, when the subcommittee I served as chief counsel, the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Privacy, announced its first hearing on smartphone geolocation technology.

Soon after that, one of the first groups we heard from wasn't a privacy group or a consumer group. It was the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women. They told us that the women who arrived at their shelters were often tracked by their abusers through secret spyware known as stalking apps.

The message was eye-opening. Because here we were about to hold a hearing about "global-positioning systems" and "cell-site location." And here was this shelter saying: This is about safety. This is about a woman's ability to live her life in peace.

And ever since then, I've tried to think about privacy not in terms of data, but in terms of people. Real people suffering real harm. And I've tried to work across the aisle to help them.

Indeed, by focusing on this problem of stalking apps, our coalition, which included Senator Klobuchar and Senator Blumenthal, was able to team up with the offices of Senator Grassley, Senator Cornyn, and Senator Graham to successfully press

the Department of Justice to run one of its first major prosecutions of one of these stalking app developers.

This is what I hope to focus on, if I'm confirmed: I want to make sure that the Commission is helping the people who need it the most.

Health care workers being sold fake N-95 masks. People fighting opiate addictions being sold scam treatments. Parents trying to make sure their kids aren't hurt by the apps they use online.

I want to help small business owners across the country who are struggling to compete on their merits, without a bigger company using its power to stifle that competition. I'm not just talking about one industry in one state. I'm talking about people across the country -- from grocers to pharmacists to online merchants.

Things are not normal. We are in a crisis. A COVID crisis. A privacy crisis. A crisis for small business.

I believe my five years here in the Senate prepared me for this crisis. In that time, I helped run some of the first major oversight hearings into tech giants. Tech giants who were logging our movements, scanning our faces, scanning teenagers' faces. I worked across the aisle to protect small businesses from federal bureaucracies. And I helped negotiate the bipartisan law that forced the NSA to be more transparent.

What I learned from the Senate is that we may disagree, profoundly, even passionately. But we cannot let that get in the way of helping the American people.

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I'm grateful for your time. I'm deeply grateful for this nomination. And I'm grateful for this country, my country, which has given me and my family so much. When we landed at JFK airport 34 years ago, this was never what we expected. I look forward to your questions.