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January 11, 2022

Dear Senator Durbin,

On behalf of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce and the 3500 businesses we represent, we are writing to express concern about the economic consequences and lasting impact of recent federal proposals targeting the technology sector.

Last year, a package of antitrust legislation was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives and in the U.S. Senate in a misguided attempt to improve competition in the U.S technology sector. Rather than advancing helpful competition standards, such proposals would actually force the breakup of leading American tech firms and undermine the digital products that these firms provide to businesses.

While we agree that it is important to have an open discussion regarding regulation and competition requirements, these proposals are unlikely to advance competition or benefit consumers. In fact, such bills could have far reaching adverse impacts, not only on the tech sector, but also on the local communities and businesses that thrive because they use digital products. The extent to which they do is immense and what is at risk is not only a landing page for such businesses but also digital solutions that enable small businesses to manage their operations, promote products, and connect with customers. These functions, often offered for free, would be undermined and impaired by the proposals.

Because the House antitrust bills are expected to adversely impact the majority of business in the country, we are concerned about the widespread economic impact, and particularly their effect on states' efforts to recover from the pandemic and economic crisis. We are particularly concerned about the following:

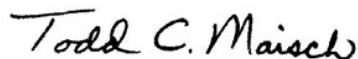
- The bills would impair the delivery of products that are critical for local businesses. Tech companies provide a wide range of products that are used by local businesses to manage their operations, connect with customers, access distant markets, and expand their footprint both domestically and abroad. As the proposed bills restrict and/or ban the ability of leading tech companies to provide such products, it is inevitable that the businesses that use such products would be harmed as well. To place this in perspective, and focusing on just a single business benefit and California alone, over 2 million businesses connected with customers in 2020 using such digital products.
- The bills may undermine economic recovery. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, digital technologies targeted by the proposals have not only enabled businesses to endure the

economic crisis, but also to take part in the recovery. For instance, a recent National Economic Bureau study found dramatic differences in the adverse impact of Covid on small and medium sized businesses: whereas businesses whose income was generated through offline channels experienced an average of 39% decline in sales during the crisis, businesses that were online incurred losses of only 23%.

- The bills will place significant job creation at risk. The proposals do not only place at risk a large number of tech sector jobs, but also a wide range of jobs in other sectors as well. The Bay Area Council Economic Institute, for instance estimated that the tech sector is the primary source of new jobs in the states, but also that every new tech job creates an average of over four non-tech jobs in other local goods and services sectors across all income groups, including lawyers, dentists, schoolteachers, cooks and retail clerks, among many others. Moreover, as the Progressive Policy Institute demonstrates in a recent report, tech created jobs improve employment outcomes across all education levels -- benefiting both college and non-college educated employees.
- The bills may be particularly harmful to minority owned businesses. While the digital tools targeted by the proposals benefit most SMBs, it is minority-owned businesses that stand to lose more as a result of such proposals. A recent report by the Connected Commerce Council found that while Covid disproportionately impacted minority owned businesses, such businesses relied on digital solutions considerably more than other businesses to endure the crisis.

We ask that each member of the Illinois Congressional delegation carefully examine the harmful impacts of the proposed legislation and advance more reasonable solutions that don't arbitrarily break up firms and undermine the products that so many of our businesses rely on. Thank you for your time and careful consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd C. Maisch". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Todd Maisch  
President and CEO  
Illinois Chamber of Commerce