



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
Federal Trade Commission  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20580

Office of Commissioner  
Rohit Chopra

STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER ROHIT CHOPRA

Regarding Law Enforcement Authorizations to Protect Military Families  
Commission File No. [redacted]  
September 14, 2021

The Commission has voted 3-2 to authorize the use of civil investigative demands and subpoenas to investigate potentially unlawful practices targeting service members, veterans, and their families. [redacted] 88 Tc (1) 28 Tw (1) c -.50(f)3

ensure that institutions accepting veterans education benefits – which are utilized by veterans, their dependents, and their survivors are not engaging in deceptive or misleading practices. Specifically, the Commission is authorized to transmit preliminary findings of its investigations to the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Department of Veterans Affairs must then take appropriate action, which can include suspension of the institution, within 90 days. ~~Scandal,~~ our predecessors on the Commission did little to fulfill the agency's duties under this statute, and we must change course.

Second, the Commission should pursue initiatives to better protect the personal data of military families. Unsurprisingly, with deployments and frequent moves, military family use of social media is high. Protecting their personal data is not only about privacy, it also implicates national security.

In 2018, Strava, which called itself “the social network for athletes,” publicly revealed the geolocations of members of the military in sensitive locations, including Iraq and Syria, on a publicly accessible map. Military families also report identity theft at a significantly higher rate than the public at large. Through enforcement, rulemaking, and other policy initiatives, the Commission should ensure its data protection work advances the goal of safeguarding this sensitive data.

Finally, the Commission should properly discharge its duty under the law to protect military families from unlawful practices in the auto market. For many service members, an automobile will be the largest purchase they make. While most auto dealers treat military families with respect, there are too many instances where these families are taken advantage of.

The FTC is tasked with enforcing a host of consumer protection laws in the auto dealer market. Congress also authorized the Commission to trigger redress, penalties, and other sanctions for unlawful practices, but Commissioners have not voted to use this authority in any meaningful way. To protect military families and honest businesses that compete fairly, the FTC should use the authorities Congress has authorized.

While I am disappointed that two of my colleagues are not supporting this effort to continue the agency's longstanding practice of authorizing enforcement resolutions to prosecute violations of the laws that Congress has authorized the FTC to enforce, I have confidence that agency staff will use these new tools effectively.