

**Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery**  
**of**  
**Full Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.**

***Innovation, Data, and Commerce Subcommittee Hearing on “Proposals to Enhance Product Safety and Transparency for Americans”***

**September 27, 2023**

This hearing is an acknowledgement of what countless Americans across the country already know: threats to consumers and commerce are pervasive and on the rise.

Consumer product-related injuries rose by nearly 8 percent in 2022, totaling over 12.5 million injuries. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) responded that year by increasing product recalls by 33 percent. Nevertheless, approximately 50,000 deaths associated with consumer products occur every year.

In 2022, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) received over 5 million reports of fraud, identity theft, and other scams, a nearly two-fold increase from pre-pandemic levels. Senior citizens, veterans, small businesses, and everyday consumers reported nearly \$8.8 billion in losses to fraud – that’s a \$2.6 billion increase over 2021 levels.

We have a duty to protect the public from hazardous and defective products, to combat unfair and deceptive acts and practices, and create a level playing field for American businesses, entrepreneurs, and innovators.

That’s why Congress has empowered the FTC to protect Americans against scam artists, privacy thieves, unlawful robocallers, and others who target consumers and small businesses. It is why we have charged the CPSC with protecting the public from unsafe consumer products, paying special attention to protecting infants and children from products that cause injury or death. It is also why we have commissioned the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to improve fuel efficiency and save lives on our nation’s roads.

And it’s why today, this Subcommittee is continuing its long tradition of focusing on legislation to strengthen consumer protections.

I’m particularly pleased that we are considering the BOSS and SWIFT Act, legislation that I introduced with Representative Pascrell. Consumers deserve to enjoy their favorite artists and other live entertainment without breaking the bank. This bill will restore fairness and transparency to the live events ticket marketplace. It will ensure that the true ticket price is clearly displayed, preserve ticket transferability, and clamp down on unauthorized speculative ticket sales.

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As we discuss all of these bills today, we should be mindful that we are asking these already small agencies to do more at a time when House Republicans are demanding drastic cuts to each of them.

House Republicans have proposed slashing the FTC's budget by \$53 million, a 12.5 percent cut from last year's funding levels. The FTC has 40 percent fewer full-time staff than it did 40 years ago. These budget cuts would jeopardize the FTC's ability to protect consumers and competition, while benefiting big tech, unlawful robocallers, and all varieties of scam artists.

House Republicans want to cut the CPSC's budget by nine percent, which could cripple the agency's ability to address dangerous and defective consumer products and establish life-saving safety standards. Children's safety would be put at risk, and unscrupulous actors would win.

And, even worse, House Republicans continue to cave to the extreme elements in their party who want to shut down the government if they don't get their way. We are four days away from government funding running out, and extreme House Republicans are making radical demands, fighting with each other, and driving our nation into a reckless shutdown that will hurt families, damage our economy, and threaten our safety.

Draconian spending cuts and government shutdowns will not protect consumers, promote competition, or strengthen American competitiveness.

I urge my Republican colleagues to abandon this dangerous strategy.