FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION
PROTECTING AMERICA'S CONSUMERS

FTC Releases 2016 Annual Highlights

FOR RELEASE

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TAGS: Health Care | Technology | Bureau of Competition | Bureau of Consumer Protection | Competition | Consumer Protection | FTC Operations | Privacy and Security

The Federal Trade Commission released the agency's 2016 Annual Highlights, which demonstrate the agency's ongoing efforts to protect consumers and promote competition over the past calendar year, and include some of the Comission's biggest successes to date.

"2016 was a historic year for the FTC. We obtained almost $12 billion in redress for consumers, and took action in more than a dozen merger cases to preserve competition," Acting Chairman Ohlhausen said. "The Commission's enforcement, policy and consumer and business education work shows our strong commitment to protecting consumers and promoting competition and innovation."

The agency's Enforcement Highlights address its key legal actions across many sectors, including health care, technology and other consumer products and services. The Commission continued to promote competition through its merger challenges and anticompetitive conduct cases. Most notably, the Commission successfully blocked three mergers, preserving competition in the market for office supplies sold to large business customers and in two local markets for hospital services. The Commission also brought two cases against companies for using unlawful means to maintain a monopoly, increasing consumer prices, and limiting access and innovation. On the consumer protection side, the Commission obtained the largest false advertising settlement in its history with Volkswagen Group of America and secured a historic settlement with Herbalife that required the company to fundamentally restructure its business and pay $200 million to compensate consumers who lost money. Privacy and data security continued to be a high priority for the agency, particularly in the mobile marketplace. For example, the agency alleged that digital advertising company Turn deceived consumers by tracking them online and through their mobile apps, even after consumers took steps to opt out of such tracking.

On the policy front, the FTC filed eight amicus briefs on topics such as pharmaceutical markets, reverse payments and the Fair Credit Reporting Act. Staff conducted 20 workshops and conferences on a range of topics including state regulation of auto sales, solar distribution generation, security for startup businesses and a number of tech-driven workshops in its Fall Technology Series. The Commission and staff also published 19 reports on topics including sharing economy platforms, big data and fraud.

Finally, the FTC's Education Highlights acknowledge the agency's work to help businesses understand their rights and legal responsibilities, and inform people about ways to avoid fraud and deceptive business practices. In addition to the many educational products the agency released in 2016, the FTC published more than 30 blog posts through its Competition Matters blog on topics like merger remedies and antitrust laws in job markets, and more than 140 blog posts for business people and attorneys. The FTC also published almost 200 blog posts for consumers in English and more than 140 blog posts for consumers in Spanish on topics including scams pushing people to pay with iTunes gift cards and IRS scams. The Commission also unveiled its free mobile-friendly financial readiness tool at Military.Consumer.gov,

which helps members of the military community navigate personal financial decisions in light of the unique challenges they face, such as frequent relocations and deployment.

More statistics are available in the Stats & Data 2016 infographic. Archives of past FTC Annual Highlights and Reports are also available online.

The Federal Trade Commission works to promote competition, and protect and educate consumers. You can learn more about consumer topics and file a consumer complaint online or by calling 1-877-FTC-HELP (382-4357). Like the FTC on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, read our blogs and subscribe to press releases for the latest FTC news and resources.

Contact Information

MEDIA CONTACT:
Nicole Jones
Office of Public Affairs
202-326-2565