



Stop the Coup 2025

a public education and mobilization campaign

Chapter 30. Federal Trade Commission. Author: Adam Candeub is a professor of law at Michigan State University whose research focuses on telecommunication, antitrust, and Internet issues. He was an acting Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Deputy Associate Attorney General at the Justice Department for the Trump Administration.

The Federal Trade Commission was created to counter anticompetitive, unfair, and deceptive practices in the marketplace, such as price fixing, empowering the FTC to enforce provisions of the 1890 Sherman Act and 1914 Clayton Act that were enacted to help regulate business. In this chapter, Candeub reviews the conservative debate over the impact of antitrust laws. He is critical of “social responsibility” practices such as Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) requirements on publicly traded corporations and their inclusion in business agreements that, he states, undermine free markets and profits, a view shared by economist Milton Friedman.

Candeub opposes the role of government “in maintaining market concentration in areas ranging from pharmaceuticals and healthcare to avionics, banking, and real estate brokerage.” He warns against collusion “between the Big Tech internet platforms and the Biden White House and administrative agencies—to censor criticism, scientific fact, and uncomfortable political truths.” While conservatives remain divided over issues like antitrust laws, they need to realign the FTC with free market principles, he states. “Unless conservatives take a firm hand to the bureaucracy and marshal its power to defend a freedom-promoting agenda, nothing will stop the bureaucracy’s anti-free market, leftist march.”

Proposed reforms:

- ✓ The FTC should carefully recalibrate certain aspects of antitrust and consumer protection law and enforcement
- ✓ The FTC should set up an ESG/DEI ‘collusion’ task force to investigate firms—particularly in private equity -- to see if ESG practices are used as a means to meet targets, fix prices, or reduce output
- ✓ Congress should investigate ESG practices as a cover for anticompetitive or unfair trade practices
- ✓ The FTC has the authority, interest, and duty to protect children from exposure to social media
 - The FTC should examine platforms’ advertising and contract-making with children as a deceptive or unfair trade practice, perhaps requiring written parental consent
- ✓ The FTC should consider a liaison to state attorneys general (AGs) to discuss enforcement policy in key sectors under the FTC’s jurisdiction: Big Tech, hospital mergers, supermarket mergers, etc.
- ✓ The FTC must become more sophisticated in measuring consumer surplus and how platforms, including Big Tech, create and keep market power



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STC 2025 Commentary: While the FTC’s mission is focused on financial oversight – focusing on antitrust and anticompetition of deceptive trade practices -- the real focus on Project’s 2025’s proposed reforms of the trade agency are designed to tackle their ideological cultural targets: DEI, and ESG practice – which they view as “covers” for unfair trade practices. In fact, the reforms are designed to weaponize the FTC to advance the conservative Christian agenda of “protecting innocent children” from exposure to what Candeub calls “the Leftist march,” and borrow the language and agenda of the anti-choice movement in the focus on parental control. The call to use Attorneys General to focus on monopolies reflects the conservative movement’s concern about the significant power that “liberal” Big Tech platforms wield due to their popularity, and their private influence on communication policy which is outside government control. If enacted, the proposed FTC reforms would restrict public access to ideas, expression and content that falls outside the conservative Christian ideology, eliminating LGBTQ+ and pro-choice content, and topics related to sexuality, as discussed in earlier chapters.

Chapter 30 - Key Points:

- ✓ Reform FTC policies and consumer protection laws, with a focus on eliminating ESG and DEI policies in companies -- particularly in private equity
- ✓ Give FTC the “authority, interest, and duty” to censor the Internet and Big Tech platforms under the guise of protecting children from exposure to “Leftist” and “liberal” content on social media
- ✓ Promote the idea of tech company “contracts” with children, possibly with parental consent, to limit what children can access on the Internet – a social control goal
- ✓ Using Attorneys General to push anti-monopoly enforcement measures to break up Big Tech, hospital, and supermarket mergers