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April 3, 2025

The Honorable Ted Cruz

Chair

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

U.S. Senate

Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Maria Cantwell

Ranking Member

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

U.S. Senate

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell,

On behalf of the The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and its Media/Telecommunications Task Force co-chairs, UnidosUS and United Church of Christ Media Justice Ministry, we write to urge you to delay the confirmation hearing for Olivia Trusty until you have a binding written assurance from the administration that the current Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will remain fully staffed — with five commissioners, including current Democratic commissioners — for the duration of the administration. Further, the committee should follow past practice and confirm a replacement for Commissioner Starks' seat alongside Ms. Trusty.

On March 18, President Trump abruptly fired Federal Trade Commissioners (FTC) Alvaro Bedoya and Rebecca Slaughter. These firings directly contradict established federal law and Supreme Court precedent, and they remove all countervailing voices from the agency. We are concerned that FCC Commissioner Gomez will face similar threats upon Olivia Trusty's confirmation as the third Republican FCC commissioner.

The FTC was established by Congress as an independent agency with bipartisan representation to ensure fair enforcement of consumer protection and antitrust laws free from political interference. By removing commissioners based on their political affiliation, President Trump has undermined the traditional independence of regulatory bodies, setting a perilous precedent that puts at risk their mission to safeguard the American public. This act is not merely a breach of democratic norms — it raises serious concerns about the separation of powers that has protected our democracy for generations.

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Similarly, the FCC was established as an independent agency with the critical mission to ensure universal connectivity, promote diverse voices in our media ecosystem, and protect consumers from fraud through robocalls and other means. The commission's ability to efficiently and effectively fulfill these vital functions depends upon maintaining its full bipartisan set of five commissioners as Congress intended. Any attempt to illegally remove Commissioner Gomez, especially with the recent announcement of Democratic Commissioner Starks' intention to step down later this spring, would severely undermine the agency's independence and statutory mission at a time when regulatory oversight of our communications infrastructure is more essential than ever. The Senate has a duty to ensure that Commissioner Starks is replaced and that Commissioner Gomez remains at the commission.

Thank you so much for your consideration of our views. Should you require further information or have any questions regarding this issue, please feel free to contact Jonathan Walter, senior policy counsel, at [walter@civilrights.org](mailto:walter@civilrights.org), Cheryl Leanza, Media/Telecommunications Task Force co-chair, at [cleanza@alhmail.com](mailto:cleanza@alhmail.com), or Claudia Ruiz, Media/Telecommunications Task Force co-chair, at [cruiz@unidosus.org](mailto:cruiz@unidosus.org).

Sincerely,

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
UnidosUs  
United Church of Christ Media Justice Ministry