

## **Rein in Big Tech Town Hall Toolkit**

A town hall is a great opportunity to connect with your senators and representatives and let them know about issues that matter to you. Members of Congress work for *you* and they will often look to town halls to decide what issues and legislation they want to prioritize. With the midterms fast approaching, now is the perfect time to make your voice heard in a town hall.

Legislation to rein in Big Tech is at a crossroads. While [poll](#) after [poll](#) shows that this legislation is immensely popular with a clear majority of voters, we need more public declarations of support from members of Congress. Your member might want to sit on the sidelines and not take a position, but your town hall questions can *get them on the record* about these pivotal pieces of legislation. Use this toolkit to join the movement to break Big Tech's stranglehold on online markets and ensure the internet remains free and open for everyone.

### **Leverage Social Media To Make Your Voice Heard:**

- Use the right #hashtag to coordinate support: **#ReinInBigTech**.
- Tag organizations supporting the bills so they can amplify your concerns: @publicknowledge, @fightfortheft, @public\_citizen, @athenaforall, and @demandprogress are just some of the organizations that would love to share your town hall experience with their own followers!
- Feel free to repurpose any content in this toolkit for your own tweets and posts.
- Use the power of video! Record both yourself asking the question as well as your member's response. Share the video on social media for further engagement using #ReinInBigTech.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions! Town halls are your chance to civically engage your members of Congress—they represent YOU and should be working to meet YOUR needs and support YOUR community.
- At the start of your question, quickly and clearly introduce yourself and say where you're from so your member of Congress can identify you as a constituent.
  - Example: "My name is John, and I'm a waiter from Phoenix. I wanted to ask about..."
- Remember: Your voice is more powerful than Big Tech's. Use it to keep government accountable and working to improve our society—not pad Big Tech's pockets.

### **Why We Need More Competition in Big Tech:**

- The internet has become a pillar of our daily lives. It's how we connect with friends and family and shop for goods and services. What began as a free and open platform filled

with innovative ideas and promise has since lost its luster.

- Today's online experience is increasingly dominated by online gatekeepers, a small handful of companies that can pick winners and losers online. They can rig the market in their favor, to the detriment of small businesses and consumers like you. Tech CEOs like Jeff Bezos and Mark Zuckerberg have become fabulously wealthy, but everyday users have been left behind. We're stuck paying more for online ads, apps, and other online goods than we should be, with all that extra cash just lining Big Tech's pockets. Meanwhile, Big Tech platforms favoring their own warehousing, logistics, and other services over those of other employers who pay better wages, provide better safety, and treat workers more fairly, harms workers by driving down wages and benefits.
- For years, Congress and federal regulators took a hands-off approach to technology markets. Companies like Amazon, Facebook, Google, and Apple grew to astronomical size by buying up and freezing out rivals, with little regulatory or legislative interference.
- Thankfully, in the past few years, Congress and regulators have woken up. We have bold, visionary leaders enforcing our antitrust laws, and the House Antitrust Subcommittee conducted a two-year investigation into digital markets. The result of that investigation are two landmark bills: **The American Innovation and Choice Online Act** and the **Open App Markets Act**.

### **How These Antitrust Bills Support Competition Against Big Tech:**

- S. 2992, [The American Innovation and Choice Online Act](#)
  - The American Innovation and Choice Online Act would enable fair competition on Big Tech platforms by banning self-preferencing of Big Tech's products & services and establishing common sense rules of the road for Big Tech platforms so small businesses get a fair shot and consumers get more choice on the platforms.
    - **What this means for you:** cheaper online products, new innovative startups get the chance to compete for your time and attention, more choices for online services, less ads and better search results
- S. 2710, [The Open App Markets Act](#)
  - The Open App Markets Act would open up app stores. Big Tech would no longer be able to obstruct alternative stores or payment services, a practice that currently allows them to extract huge fees from developers. Lower fees means users pay less for apps. In addition, Big Tech would be prohibited from favoring their own offerings either through the app storefront or the phone operating system.

- **What this means for you:** cheaper apps, new ways to get apps on your phone (if you want them), best results first when searching for apps

### **Questions To Ask During a Town Hall:**

- I want candidates that fight for small businesses and working people over the interests of massive corporations. Will you stand with us and vote in favor of the American Innovation and Choice Online Act and the Open App Markets Act?
- There are two major bipartisan tech antitrust proposals on the verge of a vote before the full Congress. Do you support the American Innovation and Choice Online Act and the Open App Markets Act?
- Clear majorities of voters support greater competition against Big Tech, including me. Do you agree we should rein in Big Tech by passing the American Innovation and Choice Online Act and the Open Markets Act?
- Monopolies aren't just bad for consumers; they're bad for workers, too. When workers have options, they can more effectively fight for better pay and better benefits. But when Big Tech is the only game in town, these companies can stack the deck against their workforce. Will you stand with workers and support the American Innovation and Choice Online Act and the Open Markets Act?
- Amazon is the preeminent e-commerce site for third-party sellers, yet right now there are no rules of the road for how they treat their sellers. Amazon is free to surveil, copy, and crush its third-party seller competition on its platform. Amazon can force sellers to pay high fees and purchase bundled, overpriced logistics add-ons they don't want. Bills like the American Innovation and Choice Online Act would put a stop to this behavior. Will you support these bills?
- Without meaningful competition, Google Search has become swamped with ads over the search results I actually want. Meanwhile, Google's stranglehold over online advertising means I'm paying more for goods and services than I should be. Will you support legislation like the American Innovation and Choice Online Act and the Open App Markets Act to rein in Google?
- Facebook and Instagram have become toxic places online. They've amplified disinformation while endangering children and teens with things like pro-eating disorder content to drive clicks. Facebook doesn't seem to care given they know we have nowhere else to go. Legislation like the American Innovation and Choice Online Act and the Open

App Markets Act can give us meaningful social media choices and make Facebook more responsive to our concerns. Will you support these bills?

- [Follow-up if they say they **support** the bills] If you **support** these bills, what will you do to move them to a vote? Will you go to [Majority Leader Schumer / Speaker Pelosi] and ask them to bring these bills to the floor for a vote?
- [Follow-up if they say they **do not** support the bills] If you **don't support** these bills, what will you do to hold these massive tech companies accountable and increase competition in this space? I'm concerned there aren't other bipartisan bills that would be able to hold Big Tech accountable.

### Learn More About the Bills and How You Can Help:

- [Resource Page](#)
- **Take Action:** [publicknowledge.org/LevelThePlayingField](https://publicknowledge.org/LevelThePlayingField)
- **Blog Posts**
  - April 27, 2022: [Movin' On Up A Little Higher](#)
  - May 27, 2022: [Big Tech Competition Bills Shouldn't Address Content Moderation](#)
  - July 11, 2022: ["Yo Competition!": How America Can Learn From Rocky & Win the Global Fight for Tech Innovation](#)
- **Other Public Knowledge Content**
  - January 20, 2022: [Letter to Senate Judiciary on AICO](#)
  - May, 17, 2022: [Why the ABA Antitrust Section is Wrong About AICO](#)
- **Key Media and Opinions**
  - August 1, 2022: [What Big Tech Thinks of the Antitrust Bill](#) (Bloomberg Technology)
  - July 25, 2022: [Antitrust Bills Will Unleash America's Innovation Economy](#) (Tech Policy Press)
  - January 20, 2022: [We Can Have a Better Internet If We Allow Competition to Flourish](#) (Tech Policy Press)
- **Other Resources**
  - July 26, 2022: [The National Federation of Businesses \(NFIB\) Endorses AICO](#)
  - July 12, 2022: [CFA in Support of AICO](#)
  - July 8, 2022: [Why Congress Should Pass AICO](#)
  - June 15, 2022: [Cicilline Letter to Senators on Content Moderation and AICO](#)
  - June 9, 2022: [Consumer Reports Implores Senators to Support AICO](#)
  - April 5, 2022: [Yelp Endorses AICO](#)
  - January 20, 2022: [Teamsters Supports AICO](#)