

Obama Advisers Agree: Lina Khan and Jonathan Kanter's Radical Agendas Threaten Consumers, U.S. Economy

Since taking the reins of the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Department of Justice's Antitrust Division, FTC Chair Lina Khan and AAG Jonathan Kanter have prioritized their own radical agenda over well-accepted antitrust principles and the facts of the law, an approach that has threatened to hurt the U.S. economy and break services and products that Americans love. Chair Khan and AAG Kanter's own statements about their approach to antitrust policy, including her comments criticizing successful American companies for providing products that are [too affordable](#), and [failed challenges](#) to beneficial mergers that would lower prices for consumers, have even worried former high-level Obama administration economic advisers.

These former Democratic officials have criticized the radical departure from principles that have guided antitrust enforcers from both sides of the aisles for the past 40 years in exchange for an extreme ideology that poses a real risk to the U.S. economy and American consumers.

Here's what former Obama administration economic experts are saying:

Former Obama administration economic advisers agree that FTC Chair Lina Khan and AAG Jonathan Kanter's radical agendas are threatening to hurt American consumers and the U.S. economy.

- [Former Obama Administration Treasury Secretary Larry Summers on Biden's "war on business:"](#)
 - Per [Fortune](#), the "Former Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers warned that the Biden administration's crackdown on mergers and acquisitions through a sweeping overhaul of rules the government uses to determine whether deals violate competition law 'seems almost like a war on business.'"

- “[The new merger guidelines proposed by the FTC and DOJ] — by moving away from an emphasis on lower prices for consumers to broader abstractions — are a substantial risk. I wish that this stepping back and offering merger guidelines had been taken as an opportunity to rationalize the policy...Right now, where I think where you’re moving away from low consumer prices as a standard, you’re mostly moving into problematic territory. There’s been a lot of that in the last several years, and it sure seems like they’re pushing forward harder, rather than backing off.”
- **[Former Obama Administration Treasury Secretary Larry Summers on the outdated doctrine of Biden’s FTC and DOJ:](#)**
 - “I am very concerned that we may be headed into a new era of Brandeisian populist antitrust policy that will make the US economy more inflationary and less resilient. The statements on policy coming from FTC and the Justice Department better reflect legal doctrines of the 1960s than economic understandings of the last two decades. An administration that prides itself on factual analysis and ‘looking at the science’ is taking a non-analytic approach...

...There are real risks. Policies that attack bigness can easily be inflationary if they prevent the exploitation of economies of scale or limit superstar firms. Likewise, policy focused on protecting competitors or communities or limiting layoffs are likely to raise costs & prices...”
- **[Former Obama Administration National Economic Council Director Jason Furman on Khan’s misguided antitrust strategy:](#)**
 - “I think that there’s some conflation of the idea that these are monopolies with the idea that these companies are causing lots of problems, and thinking that if you solve the monopoly it will solve all the other problems...There is relatively little that Lina Khan can do. I think she’s going to face very big challenges, because the courts decide.”
- **[Former Obama Administration National Economic Council Director Jason Furman on the Biden Administration's departure from the consumer welfare standard:](#)**
 - “Some of the neo-Brandesian views...often seem grounded less in consumer welfare and more in a view that everyone should be shopping at expensive craft boutiques in Brooklyn instead of buying inexpensive...mass produced stuff. When you think antitrust should support small business you think that antitrust should protect the higher-income members of the community at the expense of

their often lower income clientele...This could be another case of young, urban, highly educated people being out of touch with the interests of the working class more broadly.”

- **[Former Obama Administration Budget Director Peter Orszag to FTC Chair Lina Khan on her departure from the norm:](#)**

- “The new proposed merger guidelines are seen...as a significant departure, or at least materially different from previous guidelines. In the context of that you’ve referred to something you’ve also said in existing cases, that you’re just following the law. The law hasn’t changed. The guidelines have. So I understand that the economy has changed, but it is really that you’re mechanically following the law...because how do you explain the significantly different set of guidelines unless prior FTCs were not actually following the law...”

“Your citation of previous cases in the guidelines did attract attention because that was not the norm historically. But the specific cases that you cited have also garnered attention...that you picked some cases that were decades in the past and skipped a bunch of recent cases...”