

MARK TAKANO
41ST DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE,
AND TECHNOLOGY



Congress of the United States
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November 20, 2017

Mr. Donald S. Clark
Secretary
Federal Trade Commission
600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW.
Suite CC-5610 (Annex D),
Washington, DC 20580

Public Comment Regarding Proposed Settlement In the Matter of Victory Media, Inc.; File No. 1623210

Dear Mr. Clark:

As Vice Ranking Member of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs in the United States House of Representatives, please accept my public comment regarding the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) proposed settlement with Victory Media, Inc.

As a Member of Congress, it is my duty to ensure that our servicemembers, veterans, and their families are protected from fraud as they use the benefits they've earned through their service to obtain a postsecondary education. I was pleased that the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) investigated Victory Media and found that they violated Section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act, which prohibits "unfair methods of competition." In particular, the FTC found that Victory Media, Inc. was running an online college search tool, School Matchmaker, intended for servicemembers, but which only included schools that paid to be included and did not accurately disclose this fact.

The current proposed settlement calls for Victory Media to clearly disclose its paid commercial content, stop misrepresenting schools on its website and to work with the FTC regarding future inquiries. However, I do not think this settlement goes far enough. We must do all we can to ensure that those who serve our nation have access to accurate and trusted information, especially in regards to their education.

I request that the FTC include in its settlement, an agreement for the transfer of the trademark for "Military Friendly Schools" to the US Department of Defense or Veterans Affairs, and that any user visiting those websites be redirected to a site run by the federal government. This will prevent another entity from taking advantage of this list as Victory Media, Inc. has done. There

is precedent for this request. The website, GIBill.com, formerly run by Quinstreet, now redirects to the Department of Veteran Affairs.

I further urge you to consider including compensation to veterans who were deceived by Victory Media Inc.'s actions. I believe that a stronger settlement is needed in the case of Victory Media, Inc. to ensure that our nation's servicemembers, veterans and their families are protected from fraudulent and predatory practices. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A small, handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be the name "M. J. ...".