



December 8, 2015

The Honorable John Thune
Chairman
Senate Commerce Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Ranking Member
Senate Commerce Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson:

The National Retail Federation supports Chairman Thune's amendment in the nature of a complete substitute to S. 2044, the "Consumer Review Freedom Act of 2015." We understand Chairman Thune will seek the unanimous consent of the Senate to approve the bill, as amended, and the purpose of our letter is to indicate NRF's support for Senate passage of the substitute bill.

NRF is the world's largest retail trade association, representing discount and department stores, home goods and specialty stores, Main Street merchants, grocers, wholesalers, chain restaurants and Internet retailers from the United States and more than 45 countries. Retail is the nation's largest private sector employer, supporting one in four U.S. jobs – 42 million working Americans. Contributing \$2.6 trillion to annual GDP, retail is a daily barometer for the nation's economy.

We applaud the Chairman's and Ranking Member's efforts to advance bipartisan legislation to protect consumers from the unscrupulous practices of rogue companies that threaten litigation and seek to track down and fine consumers who post reviews they don't like on third-party websites. These egregious practices are substantially different from those of legitimate businesses that choose to host customer reviews – positive and negative – on their own websites.

As proposed in the Chairman's amendment, S. 2044 preserves the right of legitimate businesses to protect themselves and their customers by removing from their website abusive or unlawful content, clearly false or misleading statements, or obscene, sexually explicit or inappropriate content with respect to a person's race, gender or other characteristics.

S. 2044 is a reasonable and appropriate legislative response to calls that Congress protect consumers against bad actors while simultaneously ensuring that legitimate retailers may continue to host and promote honest customer reviews in a welcoming, interactive environment.

Sincerely,

David French
Senior Vice President
Government Relations