

Biden names Big Tech critic to head antitrust unit

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The Department of Justice (DOJ) building on January 11, 2021 in Washington, DC.

President Joe Biden on Tuesday named a prominent Big Tech critic to head the Justice Department's antitrust division in another sign of

aggressive moves to counter the dominance of major Silicon Valley firms.

Jonathan Kanter, a lawyer who has represented firms challenging tech platforms, would if confirmed head up the division to handle an array of cases expected against the largest tech firms for alleged monopoly abuses.

The Kanter nomination follows the appointment Lina Khan, an advocate of breaking up the biggest tech firms, to head the Federal Trade Commission, which is also involved in [antitrust enforcement](#).

A White House statement called Kanter "a leading advocate and expert in the effort to promote strong and meaningful antitrust enforcement and competition policy."

Kanter has represented firms such as Yelp and Spotify which have claimed tech giants such as Google and Apple have used unfair practices to thwart competition. He also represented the News Media Alliance in claims that large platforms have stymied media firms.

A former FTC lawyer, he recently started his own "boutique antitrust law firm that advocates in favor of federal and state antitrust law enforcement," according to the White House.

Early indications from the Biden administration suggest a ramped up effort at antitrust enforcement, amid calls by some to break up some of the biggest and most successful Big Tech firms.

Biden earlier this month unveiled a wide-ranging plan aimed at tilting the balance of power away from corporations and towards "the little guy."

Biden described the initiative as a shift from what he called

Washington's 40-year "experiment of letting giant corporations accumulate more and more power" as he signed an executive order directing changes on everything from the sale of hearing aids to the disclosure of airline baggage fees.

"We have to get back to an economy that grows from the bottom up," he said.

The order, which drew strong praise from consumer advocates but a scathing response from some industry lobbying groups, outlines 72 initiatives across the [federal government](#) and announces the creation of the White House Competition Council to monitor progress.

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