

Congress panel calls on Amazon chief Bezos to testify

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The US House Judiciary Committee wants to hear from Jeff Bezos—pictured in May 2019—over reports that Amazon used sensitive data from third-party sellers on its platform in order to develop competing products

A US congressional panel on Friday called on Amazon chief Jeff Bezos to testify about allegations the online giant used sensitive data from third-party sellers on its platform to develop competing products.

In a letter to Bezos, the House Judiciary Committee said the claim, if true, would contradict sworn testimony by Amazon's general counsel last year.

"We expect you, as chief executive Officer of Amazon, to testify before the Committee," read the letter signed by committee chairman Jerry Nadler, a Democratic congressman from New York, and others.

"Although we expect that you will testify on a voluntary basis, we reserve the right to resort to compulsory process if necessary," said the Committee, which said it had additional questions for Bezos about e-commerce competition.

Amazon did not immediately return a request for comment.

The Judiciary Committee specifically cited a Wall Street Journal report from April 23, based on interviews with former and current employees as well as internal company documents, which claimed Amazon used [sensitive information](#) from private sellers for its own competitive advantage.

"If the reporting in the Wall Street Journal article is accurate, then statements Amazon made to the Committee about the company's [business practices](#) appear to be misleading, and possibly criminally false or perjurious," the panel wrote.

While testifying before a subcommittee last year, Amazon [general counsel](#) Nate Sutton said the company did not use seller data to compete with them, the letter noted.

The request for Bezos to testify came as Amazon shares skidded in the wake of the company cautioning that second quarter earnings would be entirely wiped out by expenses related to COVID-19 as it works to keep up with surging demand at a time when many brick-and-mortar stores are closed.

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