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Advocates Urge Federal Consumer Agency to Escalate Action Against Data Brokers that Harm Millions through Deceptive Practices

Washington DC – Today, a coalition of immigrant rights, consumer rights, and privacy organizations sent a [letter](#) to the federal Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) urging the agency to “use the full force of its authority” to rein in data brokers that harm millions of consumers through practices baked into their business model.

The letter, sent to CFPB director Rohit Chopra, asks the agency to use its many tools – enforcing violations, supervising consumer agencies, making forward-looking regulations, and clarifying existing law – to correct these wrongs.

For too long, data brokers – entities that aggregate and sell personal data – have profited from a range of bad behaviors that can lead people to be denied jobs, government benefits, and housing – or even to suffer arrest and deportation. Many people are not even aware of how much of their private information is being collected, aggregated, and sold to countless other parties by data brokers.

These practices are wide-ranging and include:

- Buying information from large utilities companies and selling the personal information they obtained on hundreds of millions of consumers without their knowledge or consent
- Selling dossiers containing sensitive personal information to law enforcement agencies that use them to sidestep legal warrant requirements to arrest, jail, and deport
- Selling information about low-income consumers of color to entities that market predatory products like high-interest payday loans
- Collecting and selling inaccurate data without doing due diligence to find and fix mistakes that shut consumers off from credit, jobs, housing, and government support

“When a person registers for essential utilities, the last thing they expect is that their name, address, and other personal data will be packaged up and sold on the open market, including to police agencies who could show up at their doorstep,” said **Laura Rivera, senior staff attorney for Just Futures Law**. “Data brokers can’t be allowed to exploit our most basic needs without accountability, and that’s why we’re calling on this agency to do more to protect consumers, especially those most harmed by these unscrupulous practices.”

The complete list of signatories to the letter to the CFPB are the Center for Democracy and Technology, the Center on Privacy and Technology at Georgetown Law, Consumer Action, Consumer Reports, Demand Progress, the Electronic Privacy Information Center, Mijente, and the National Consumer Law Center.

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About Just Futures Law: *Just Futures Law is a transformative legal organization that defends and builds the power of immigrants’ rights and criminal justice organizers and base-building community groups working to disrupt and dismantle our deportation and mass incarceration systems. Follow us @JustFuturesLaw.*