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A recent story in the [Wall Street Journal](#) described Josh Wright as the “FTC’s most conservative commissioner.” It is a sign of today’s politicized environment that this label is used as a substitute for serious substantive analysis of the particular positions that Wright has taken relative to the other commissioners. The article also noted that he was the Republican commissioner who brokered a deal with the three democratic members to publish a short set of [guidelines](#) to deal with the Delphic question of what counts as unlawful methods of competition. Before I had received knowledge that Josh was about to resign, I had posted a [piece](#) on Defining Ideas that carried with it the near-oxymoronic title, “When Bureaucrats Do Good.”

I must confess that my initial impression on hearing of the publication of the statement was that it would be more bad news. But I happily I changed course after reading the statement, which is mercifully short, and after having the benefit of the thoughtful [dissent](#) of the other Republican Commissioner Maureen Ohlhausen, and of the [speech](#) that FTC Chairwoman Edith Ramirez gave in defense of those guidelines at the George Washington Law School.

There are clearly times when short should be regarded as sweet, and this is one of them. It may well be that there is an iron law that says the longer the document that any government prepares, the worse its content. This short policy statement sets matters in the right direction when it treats unfair methods of competition as a variation on the basic theme of monopoly, and notes that where the antitrust laws do apply, the FTC should be reluctant to exercise its standalone jurisdiction. It is a tribute to Ramirez and Wright that they could come to agree on the statement, so that a set of sound principles has bipartisan support.

It is also welcome that the dissent of Commissioner Ohlhausen does not differ on fundamental orientation but on two questions that I regard as having subordinate importance: do we give public hearings before publishing the statement; and do we provide more illustrations as to how the principle out to be applied. The pressure therefore came from the pro-market side of the political spectrum such that there is now no Commissioner on the FTC who regards Section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act as a general warrant to pursue any and all forms of professional mischief.

The contrast of this document with the FCC’s net neutrality principles is too clear to require much comment.

At this point, Josh will return to his position at George Mason University Law School, where he shall resume his distinguished academic career. He regards the publication of this one page statement as the capstone of his career. On that point, I am confident that history will prove him right. Welcome back to the Academy, and thanks for a job well done on the Commission.

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