

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY, IOWA, CHAIRMAN

LINDSEY O. GRAHAM, SOUTH CAROLINA
JOHN CORNYN, TEXAS
MICHAEL S. LEE, UTAH
TED CRUZ, TEXAS
JOSH HAWLEY, MISSOURI
THOM TILLIS, NORTH CAROLINA
JOHN KENNEDY, LOUISIANA
MARSHA BLACKBURN, TENNESSEE
ERIC SCHMITT, MISSOURI
KATIE BOYD BRITT, ALABAMA
ASHLEY MOODY, FLORIDA

RICHARD J. DURBIN, ILLINOIS
SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, RHODE ISLAND
AMY KLOBUCHAR, MINNESOTA
CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, DELAWARE
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, CONNECTICUT
MAZIE HIRONO, HAWAII
CORY A. BOOKER, NEW JERSEY
ALEX PADILLA, CALIFORNIA
PETER WELCH, VERMONT
ADAM B. SCHIFF, CALIFORNIA

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

October 21, 2025

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Andrew N. Ferguson
Chairman
Federal Trade Commission

Dear Chairman Ferguson:

On March 28, 2025, I wrote to you concerning allegations that The Knot, a wedding planning website, defrauded customers and engaged in deceptive business practices.¹ According to whistleblowers and media reports, The Knot promised to advertise their customers' businesses on The Knot's website which would lead to them receiving high-quality leads; however, these small businesses allege that The Knot didn't advertise their businesses on the website as they were contractually required to and the leads they received were largely fake or otherwise lacked legitimacy.² Further, they allege that The Knot promised discount pricing, but failed to add them to their customers' bills.³ In addition, I was also alerted by several small businesses in Iowa who alleged they were also defrauded by The Knot through these fraudulent and deceptive business practices. In my letter, I asked what steps have been taken to investigate these allegations to determine whether they were accurate, and if the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) had yet to do so, that it ought to look into them and hold violators accountable.⁴ On April 15, 2025, I received your response stating the FTC couldn't disclose whether or not the agency started an investigation.⁵

According to a March 31, 2025, article by The New Yorker, "since 2018, more than two hundred formal complaints have been made about allegedly fraudulent activity on The Knot and WeddingWire" to the FTC.⁶ Further, since I sent you my March 28, 2025, letter, my office has received 184 complaints

¹ Letter from Senator Charles E. Grassley, Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary to Mark T. Uyeda, Acting Chairman, Securities and Exchange Commission and Andrew N. Ferguson, Chairman, Federal Trade Commission (Mar. 28, 2025)

https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley_to_sec_ftc_-_the_knot.pdf.

² *Id.*; see Adam Iscoe, *Does the Knot Have a "Fake Brides" Problem?*, The New Yorker (Mar. 31, 2025)

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/04/07/does-the-knot-have-a-fake-brides-problem>; Thomas Barrabi, *The Knot's angry vendors dismiss CEO memo as 'damage control' after swindling advertisers allegations*, New York Post (Aug. 11, 2023)

<https://nypost.com/2023/08/11/the-knots-vendors-dismiss-memo-after-alleged-advertiser-swindling/>; Alexandra S. Levine and Richard Nieva, *How Wedding Giant The Knot Pulled The Veil Over Advertisers' Eyes*, Forbes (Aug. 3, 2023)

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/alexandralevine/2023/08/03/the-knot-wedding-whistleblowers-advertisers-fraud/>.

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Letter from Andrew N. Ferguson, Chairman, Federal Trade Commission to Senator Charles E. Grassley, Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary (Apr. 15, 2025) (on file with Committee staff).

⁶ Adam Iscoe, *Does the Knot Have a "Fake Brides" Problem?*, The New Yorker (Mar. 31, 2025)

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/04/07/does-the-knot-have-a-fake-brides-problem>.

from small businesses across the country alleging The Knot engaged in the misconduct raised in that letter. One small business owner informed my investigative staff that she contacted a supervisor on The Knot's customer support team to discuss why her business continued to be advertised in the wrong section of the website and hadn't received substantive leads. The small business owner told my office that the supervisor said she hadn't received legitimate leads because her small business didn't have any reviews on the website. The small business owner alleges that the supervisor then turned off the call recorder and told her that she should create fake accounts and leave her own business fake reviews to boost the credibility of her profile which would in turn help her receive a higher number of legitimate leads. The small business owner told my office that she was shocked The Knot's solution to their failures was to recommend that she commit fraud by scamming potential customers into selecting her business.

The small business owner informed my investigative staff that after she continuously called The Knot's customer service line demanding they provide her with the discounts they promised, in September 2025 The Knot removed her small business' page from The Knot's website, with no explanation, but still charged her credit card for the advertisement services. The small business owner summarized her experience with The Knot as: "They are preying on small businesses who need help growing their audience and promising things that will never happen. They don't seem to have an issue taking my money but not providing the advertising services they promised in the contract I signed."

The almost 200 messages I've received since I sent you my March 28 letter, along with these new allegations, show they aren't merely isolated incidents but are instead a nationwide problem that requires investigation. If the FTC is not investigating, I strongly urge it to do so considering the breadth of alleged wrongdoing and its widespread impact. Moreover, to the extent an investigation is done, I would like to know whether or not the allegations have been found to be true and accurate, and the small businesses, including those in Iowa, want to know too.

Thank you for your prompt review and responses. If you have any questions, please contact Brian Randolph on my Committee staff at (202) 224-5225.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary

CC: The Honorable Paul S. Atkins
Chairman
Securities and Exchange Commission