



Antitrust: Balancing Competition and Innovation

Discussion Guide

Let's review

At the start of each discussion, review the conversation ground rules for returning and new members alike to set the stage for active participation by all. You may want to use a timer as you go around the room.

And don't forget to decide who will take notes and post a discussion recap.

- **Be open and curious:** Everyone has a unique perspective, so listen and be prepared to hear a different point of view. Remember, you do not need to share your political affiliation; this is a discussion and exchange of ideas, not politics.
- **Be respectful and engaged:** Be sure that everyone has a chance to speak before adding a second comment or perspective. Encourage each other's participation.
- **Be focused and concise:** Keep the conversation centered on the issue and the brief.

The "Table-it" Rule: If the group has gone off-topic but the area is of interest, the group can table the conversation and save it for another time to be addressed in a different manner.

Let's begin

- Take five minutes to review the [Executive Summary](#) for this brief. Highlight the main point of each section and key statistics.
- Each member is invited to answer the following questions in a **two-three minute reaction** to the brief:
 - Introduce yourself, and share what "lens of care" did you wear when reviewing this brief (e.g. personal, professional, community, state, nation, global)?
 - What did you find most interesting or surprising from reading the brief? What matters?

Spread the Word: Some Facts to Share with the Group During Your Discussion

- The [purpose of antitrust laws](#) is to "protect and promote competition to ensure consumers get the lowest prices and the best quality possible." This is known as the Consumer Welfare standard.
- Three antitrust laws - the [Sherman Act](#) (1890), the [Clayton Act](#) (1914), and the [Federal Trade Commission Act](#) (1914) - are to this day the core federal antitrust laws in effect. The Federal Trade Commission and Department of Justice are the primary enforcing agencies.
- There has been [corporate consolidation in over 75% of U.S. industries](#) including healthcare, financial services, and agriculture. A majority of economists agree that [consolidation is driving up prices](#).

Let's discuss

Below are 3 questions for the group to consider and discuss, or choose your own.

- **Community:** Do you feel the effects of competition policy in your area?
- **Government:** Antitrust law has a long history; what should its role be in today's society and economy?
- **Business:** Are businesses thriving in your community? Is it easy to establish an enterprise, grow, and compete?

Let's act

1. **Take it local. Talk to your neighbors** to identify the status of competition and economic concentration in your community.
2. **Explore the impact of antitrust laws in your state.** Search your state or municipality's website for a division of consumer affairs. Get to know local businesses owners or entrepreneurs in your community, and ask them about how competition affects their businesses.
3. **Investigate community programs.** A Chamber of Commerce promotes the interests of the business community. You can find your local Chamber of Commerce [here](#).
4. **Research your elected representatives' positions** on antitrust legislation, and their vision for how to tackle economic competition and concentration problems facing Americans and your community. You can find contact information for federal, state, and local government officials [here](#). Your state or municipality's websites will also have information to contact leaders. Try looking at the drop-down menu for a *Government* tab.
5. **Establish a relationship with your legislators.** It's easy to establish a relationship with your legislators. Start by introducing yourself. You can also learn to write to your representatives or set up a meeting with a legislator on [The Policy Circle website](#).
6. **Consider writing a letter to the editor or an op-ed on your stance on antitrust laws in your local paper.** Learn how on [The Policy Circle website](#).

Next Steps for Your Circle

- **Post a Recap:** Summarize your discussion to share thoughts with members not present, and share planned actions from group members. Designate who will post a meeting recap on your circle page.
- **Decide your next meeting topic.** Want to discuss a related brief at your next meeting? Suggestions include:
 - [Economic Growth](#)
 - [Government Regulation](#)
 - [Free Enterprise](#)
- **Dive Deeper into the issues.** If this is an area you would like to pursue further, consider taking possible steps to influence policy. The Policy Circle offers resources for [developing a message about your issue](#) and [organizing a petition](#) to amplify your voice and raise awareness. Don't miss our [latest events](#) that help you dive deeper on this issue and more.