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Attorney General

Josh Stein

Attorney General Stein Sues Google For Additional Antitrust Violations

For Immediate Release:

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(RALEIGH) Attorney General Josh Stein today led a coalition of 37 attorneys general in filing a lawsuit against Google alleging that it harmed consumers by using its dominance to unfairly restrict competition with the Google Play Store, limiting their choices and driving up app prices.

The lawsuit, led by Attorney General Stein and the Attorneys General of Utah, New York, and Tennessee, alleges that Google's actions violate federal and state antitrust laws. Attorney General Stein previously **led a lawsuit** against Google for using anticompetitive exclusionary contracts and illegal conduct to maintain a monopoly over search engines.

"No matter how big a company is, it has to play by the rules," said Attorney General Josh Stein. "Google isn't. It is using its monopoly power to cut off competition and increase its power and profits at the expense of North Carolina consumers by forcing Google Play Store customers to overpay for apps. I will continue to fight on behalf of millions of North Carolina consumers for a marketplace that encourages competition and innovation at a fair price."

The lawsuit alleges that Google:

🇺🇸 English

- Broke its promise to app developers and device manufacturers that it would keep Android "open source," allowing developers to create compatible apps and distribute them without unnecessary restrictions, but did not keep that promise. Google has not allowed Android to be "open source" for many years, effectively cutting off potential competition.
- Imposes technical barriers that strongly discourage or effectively prevent third-party app developers from distributing apps outside the Google Play Store.
- Forces Google's proprietary apps to be "pre-loaded" on essentially all devices designed to run on the Android OS, which cuts off potential competition.
- Forces app developers and app users alike to use Google's payment processing service, Google Play Billing, to process payments for in-app purchases of content consumed within the app. By requiring this, Google is able to extract an exorbitant processing fee as high as 30 percent for each transaction, which is more than 10 times as high as the fee charged by Google's competitors.
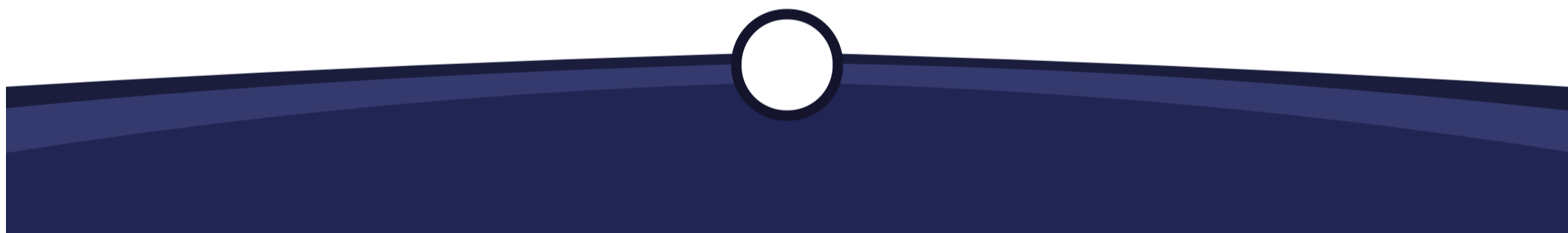
Attorney General Stein is joined in filing this lawsuit by the Attorneys General of Utah, New York, Tennessee, Alaska, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia.

A copy of the complaint is available **here**.

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