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ROB BONTA

Attorney General

Attorney General Bonta Secures Decision Allowing Antitrust Lawsuit Against Google to Move Forward

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OAKLAND — California Attorney General Rob Bonta, as part of a coalition led by the U.S. Department of Justice, today secured a court decision allowing the coalition's lawsuit against Google for antitrust violations to move forward. The decision by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia denied Google's motion to dismiss the lawsuit, which charges Google LLC (Google) with operating an unfair monopoly scheme in markets for advertising technology (ad tech). The lawsuit alleges the California-based technology company leverages control over the technologies through which web display ads are bought and sold, driving out competition and receiving profits that far exceed what could be sustained in a competitive market. This scheme disproportionately hurts advertisers, small businesses, website creators, and consumers, and deters innovation in the ad tech industry.

“We are pleased with the court’s decision to move this case forward so that Google may face accountability,” **said Attorney General Bonta.** “Google’s anticompetitive practices and obsessive need for control of ad tech markets has not only inflated prices, but has stifled creativity in a space where innovation is crucial. Poised to become the fourth largest economy in the world, it is in California’s best interest to ensure that creativity, innovation, and competition in technology are protected. We look forward to making our case in court on behalf of California consumers.”

Attorney General Bonta is involved in a number of cases against Google. In March 2023, Attorney General Bonta secured a court order sanctioning Google for its destruction of evidence in another lawsuit against the company filed in 2021 for anticompetitive practices related to the Google Play Store. Attorney General Bonta first alerted the court of Google’s attempts to subvert discovery in late 2022 and has subsequently updated the court with additional examples of Google’s conduct.

Attorney General Bonta stands firm in protecting competition in the marketplace, fair prices, and California families through a number of actions nationwide involving companies in the technology industry:

- Attorney General Bonta sued Amazon in September 2022, alleging that the company stifled competition and increased prices across California through anticompetitive contracting practices in violation of California’s Unfair Competition Law and Cartwright Act. The court recently denied Amazon’s motion to dismiss the case and unsealed additional evidence of antitrust violations.
- In November 2022, Attorney General Bonta announced settlements against Google and iHeartMedia resolving allegations that Google paid DJs, predominately at iHeartMedia, to offer misleading personal endorsements of the Google Pixel 4 cell phone.

- On April 24, 2023, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, in its decision in *Epic. Games v. Apple*, upheld California’s role in enforcing fair competition laws, aligning with Attorney General Bonta’s brief filed in March 2023 urging the court to recognize broad protections for fair competition under California's Unfair Competition Law.

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