



## Newsroom

# Attorney General Schwalb Joins Federal Antitrust Lawsuit Against Live Nation



May 23, 2024

Department of Justice and 30 AGs Allege that Live Nation Has Illegally Monopolized the Live Entertainment Industry

**WASHINGTON, DC** – Attorney General Brian L. Schwalb joined the US Department of Justice (DOJ) and a bipartisan coalition of 30 state Attorneys General in filing an antitrust lawsuit against Live Nation Entertainment, Inc., which owns Ticketmaster, alleging that the companies have illegally monopolized the live entertainment industry, increasing the prices District residents pay for live shows.

**“The District’s vibrant live entertainment scene is vital to our local economy and culture, from fans flocking to see their favorite artists, to the thousands of workers employed by DC’s venues,”** said Attorney General Schwalb. **“Over the years, Live Nation has grown to dominate nearly every corner of the live entertainment ecosystem, developing a stranglehold on the industry that has eliminated any meaningful competition. Almost every sizable concert venue in the District is locked into a Ticketmaster deal, resulting in District concertgoers paying Ticketmaster’s exorbitant fees to enjoy shows. My office will always fight to ensure that District residents have access to free, fair markets that promote competition and choice.”**

The District is home to 20+ music venues of varying sizes, from Capital One Arena, which can fit more than 20,000 fans, to more intimate venues. In 2022 alone, District residents and visitors spent \$1.1 billion dollars on live entertainment, and Ticketmaster sales data for the year show the District had far higher per capita Ticketmaster ticket sales than any other state. Live Nation controls two of the most important parts of the live entertainment industry at District concert venues: ticketing and artists. Live Nation is the exclusive ticketer to nearly all sizable venues in DC. Live Nation is the dominant content provider to those venues because its monopoly of concert promotions means neither artists nor venues have comparable, competitive alternatives to Live Nation. That means for most shows in the District, Live Nation’s misconduct results in fans paying more to see the show.

In the lawsuit, filed in the US District Court for the Southern District of New York, the DOJ and states allege that Live Nation has:

- **Harmed fans through higher fees** and limited the amount of information fans have regarding the ultimate cost to see a show. Fans’ ticketing experience—from buying a ticket to showtime—is also worse than it would be if the industry was competitive.
- **Maintained its monopoly** in ticketing markets by locking up venues through restrictive long-term, exclusive agreements and threats that venues will lose access to Live Nation-controlled tours and artists if they sign with a rival ticketer.
- **Leveraged its extensive network** of venues to force artists to select Live Nation as a promoter instead of its rivals, maintaining its promotions monopoly.

The lawsuit asks the court to restore competition in the live entertainment industry by:

- **Securing financial compensation** for the District, as well as for fans who were overcharged by Live Nation, leading them to pay more than they would have in a competitive market for tickets.
- **Prohibiting** Live Nation from engaging in its anticompetitive practices.
- **Ordering** Live Nation to divest Ticketmaster.

A copy of the complaint is available [here. \(https://oag.dc.gov/sites/default/files/2024-05/File%20stamp%20LNE%20Complaint.pdf\)](https://oag.dc.gov/sites/default/files/2024-05/File%20stamp%20LNE%20Complaint.pdf)

This matter was handled by Assistant Attorneys General Amanda Hamilton, Elizabeth Arthur, and Mehreen Imtiaz; Ruff Fellow Cole Niggeman; and Section Chief Adam Gitlin of the Antitrust and Nonprofit Enforcement Section.

In joining the DOJ’s complaint, AG Schwalb is joined by the Attorneys General of Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming.

## OAG's Antitrust Enforcement Actions

OAG has a long record of holding companies accountable for antitrust violations that harm District consumers. Most recently, OAG brought a [lawsuit in November of 2023 against RealPage \(https://oag.dc.gov/release/attorney-general-schwalb-sues-realpage-residential\)](https://oag.dc.gov/release/attorney-general-schwalb-sues-realpage-residential) and 14 of the largest residential landlords in the District for colluding to illegally raise rents for tens of thousands of DC residents. OAG has also opposed anticompetitive mergers such as those between Kroger and Albertsons, JetBlue and Spirit, Anthem and Cigna, Staples and Office Depot, and fantasy sports sites DraftKings and FanDuel.

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