



Attorney General

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## Attorney General Josh Stein Sues Google over Search Monopoly



**“Just being big isn’t the problem. But when a company uses its size to thwart competition – and in the process, deny North Carolinians the advances and benefits that would come from healthy competition – I will take action. We allege that Google has used its massive size and dominant position to maintain its monopoly, and we are asking the court to repair the market for search on behalf of the millions of North Carolinians who rely on search engines.”**



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RALEIGH – Attorney General Josh Stein today sued Google over its search monopoly. Specifically, Attorney General Stein alleges that Google has used anticompetitive exclusionary contracts and conduct to illegally maintain a monopoly over search engines and related advertising markets. As a result, Google has deprived internet users of competition that would have provided greater choice, innovation, and better privacy protections.

“Just being big isn’t the problem,” said Attorney General Josh Stein. “But when a company uses its size to thwart competition – and in the process, deny North Carolinians the advances and benefits that would come from healthy competition – I will take action. We allege that Google has used its massive size and dominant position to maintain its monopoly, and we are asking the court to repair the market for search on behalf of the millions of North Carolinians who rely on search engines.”

The lawsuit alleges that Google:

- Uses exclusionary agreements and other practices to limit the ability of rival general search engines and potential rivals to reach people. This conduct cements Google as the go-to search engine on computers and mobile devices.

- Harms users of its search-advertising management tool, SA360, by promising that it would not favor Google search advertising over that of competing search engines such as Bing. Instead, Google favors advertising on its own platform, inflating its profits to the detriment of advertisers, consumers, and competitors.
- Discriminates against specialized search sites – such as those that provide travel, home repair, or entertainment services – by depriving them access to prime real estate among its search results because these competing sites threaten Google’s revenue and dominant position.

The attorneys general argue that more competition in the general search engine market would benefit people by improving privacy protections and providing more targeted, better results. Competitive general search engines also could offer better quality advertising and lower prices to advertisers.

The lawsuit requests that the court halt Google’s illegal conduct and restore a competitive marketplace. The states also seek to unwind any advantages that Google gained as a result of its anticompetitive conduct, including divestiture of assets as appropriate. Finally, the court is asked to provide any additional relief it determines appropriate, as well as reasonable fees and costs to the states.

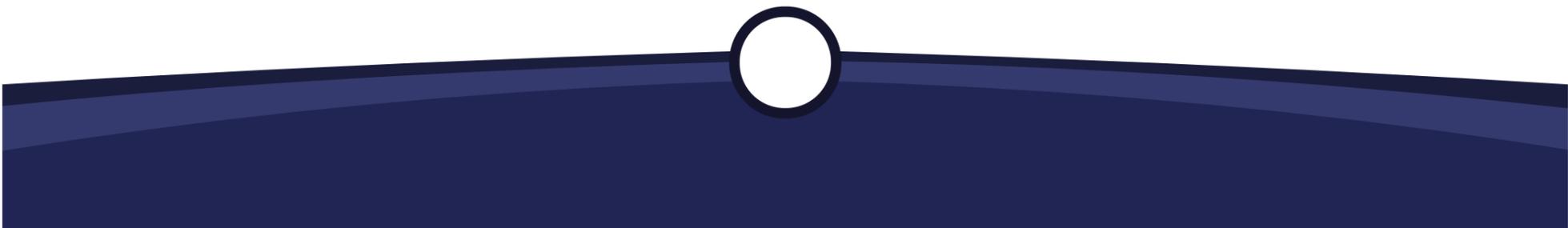
The complaint was filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, in conjunction with a Motion to Consolidate seeking to combine the states’ case with the pending U.S. DOJ case. The states’ complaint is consistent with the lawsuit filed by the U.S. Department of Justice on Oct. 20, which alleged that Google improperly maintains its monopoly power in general search and search advertising through the use of exclusionary agreements.

Attorney General Stein helped to lead this lawsuit as a member of the states’ executive committee. The full bipartisan coalition includes attorneys general from Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, Nebraska, New York, Tennessee, Utah, Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wyoming, the District of Columbia, and the territories of Guam and Puerto Rico.

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