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TJ Donovan, Vermont Attorney General

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Monopoly

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Attorney General Donovan Joins Lawsuit Seeking to End Google's Illegal Search Monopoly

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Attorney General T.J. Donovan today joined a bipartisan coalition of 37 attorneys general in suing Google for anticompetitive conduct in violation of Section 2 of the Sherman Act. The coalition alleges that Google illegally maintains its monopoly power over general search engines and related advertising markets through a series of anticompetitive exclusionary contracts and conduct. As a result,

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Google has deprived consumers of competition that  English

greater choice, innovation, and better privacy protections.

Furthermore, Google has exploited its market position to accumulate and leverage data to the detriment of consumers.

“Google has become a company that Vermonters know and rely on, but their anticompetitive conduct has denied consumers the benefits of healthy marketplace competition,” said Attorney General Donovan. “It is time for the legal system to take a look at Google’s marketplace dominance and illegal conduct to restore a competitive marketplace.”

The coalition’s complaint is consistent with the lawsuit filed by the U.S. Department of Justice in October 2020, which alleged that Google improperly maintains its monopoly power in general search and search advertising through the use of exclusionary agreements. The coalition’s filing, however, asserts additional allegations and describes Google’s monopoly maintenance scheme as a multi-part effort. 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 consumers. This conduct cements Google as the go-to search engine on computers and mobile devices.
- Disadvantages 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 continuously favors advertising on its own

platform, inflating its profits to the detriment of

consumers.

- Discriminates against specialized search sites – such as those that provide travel, home repair, or entertainment services – by depriving them access to prime real estate because these competing sites threaten Google's revenue and dominant position.

The coalition argues that more competition in the general search engine market would benefit consumers – for example, through improved privacy protections and more targeted results for consumers. Competitive general search engines also could offer better quality advertising and lower prices to advertisers. The coalition also explains how Google's acquisition and command of vast amounts of data – obtained in increasing part because of consumers' lack of choice – has fortified Google's monopoly and created significant barriers for potential competitors and innovators.

The attorneys general are asking the court to 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.

Attorney General Donovan is joined in today's lawsuit by the attorneys general of Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut,

Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine

 English

Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wyoming, the District of Columbia, and the territories of Guam and Puerto Rico.

A copy of the lawsuit is available [here](#).

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