

AG ROB BONTA  
Congressional Hearing: Live Nation/Ticketmaster  
Prepared Remarks

- Good afternoon. I'm California Attorney General Rob Bonta. It's an honor to speak with you today.
- First, I would like to extend my gratitude to Chairman Blumenthal and Chairman Raskin for convening this hearing and shining a light on an antitrust case that impacts everyday Americans and their wallets.
- Live Nation and Ticketmaster's unlawful, anticompetitive domination over ticketing and promotion hurt fans, artists, and businesses nationwide.
- The company overcharged fans and delivered a, frankly, terrible ticketing experience.
- It locked up venues through restrictive long-term, exclusive agreements and threats to block them from tours and artists.
- And it leveraged its extensive network of venues to force artists to use Live Nation as a promoter.
- Which is why our bipartisan coalition of more than 30 attorneys general and, originally, the U.S. DOJ joined forces in 2024 to take Live Nation to court for violating the Sherman Antitrust Act.
- Our case was solid.
- We had employee Slack messages that mocked customers for being "so stupid" and saying the company was "robbing them blind baby."
- We had a recorded phone call where Live Nation's CEO threatened to steer shows away from the Barclays Center in Brooklyn if they went with competitor SeatGeek. A threat they later made good on.
- In just the first week of trial, we'd already heard in court that Live Nation fully intended to take advantage of fans and were able to because fans had no other options.
- So, you can imagine our shock and disappointment when the Trump Administration abruptly threw in the towel and settled out its claims days into trial.

- Our coalition of blue and red states refused to lose steam without the feds on board. We stayed in the fight, made our case, and secured a historic and resounding victory on all of our claims.
- In fact, in an 11-page, 33-question jury verdict form, the jury found against Live Nation and Ticketmaster on every single question posed to them. That speaks volumes.
- Our case is proof of just how far states can — and will — go to protect our residents and businesses from big corporations using their power to illegally raise prices and rip off Americans.
- With or without the federal administration.
- I've stressed the bipartisan nature of this case because antitrust enforcement is about fighting for affordability. A fight that should be just plain American, regardless of your state or side of the aisle.
- Be it tickets, groceries, cable, streaming services, internet, clothing, or pet food, when we go after corporations that monopolize markets, collude to fix prices, or merge to knock out competition, we're fighting to make life more affordable for everyday people.
- That's something we should all be able to get behind.
- Until recently, it's work that has often been shared between the states and the federal government.
- Sometimes, like with our recent Agri Stats settlement, it still is.
- But, more and more, President Trump and his Administration seem to have abandoned the fight for a free and fair market and abdicated their role to hold corporations accountable to the law.
- State AGs have been left with no choice but to step up to the plate, ready to go. And, we are.
- As this country's affordability crisis worsens, and unfortunately as the federal government pursues policies that will only exacerbate it...

- It's critical that our states continue to exercise the enforcement power we have to stand up for consumers, safeguard competition, and prevent big corporations from breaking the law and ripping off consumers.
- Antitrust enforcement is democracy's check on oligarchy.
- A check on wealthy businesses seeking to game the system and knock out competition for their own gain, trampling over consumers, workers, and our free market as they go.
- A check on billionaires currying favor with the President so he'll do their bidding.
- A check on the elite few who think they're above the law, when they're not. No one is.
- Antitrust enforcement protects businesses that follow the law.
- It levels the playing field for businesses to grow and thrive based on what they put out in the market.
- And it ensures that all Americans can participate in and benefit from a vibrant economy — not just well-connected businesses, shareholders, and those who have means to participate in the stock market.
- If you need proof that antitrust enforcement works, just look at California.
- We're the fourth largest economy in the world, home to more Fortune 500 companies than any other state, home to nearly two-thirds of all U.S. venture capital investment AND we have some of the strongest antitrust and consumer protections on the books.
- That's no accident.
- Thank you, again, for your interest in this case and this topic. I'm grateful to have the opportunity to be here.