

# **Attorney General Raoul Files Lawsuit Seeking To End Illegal Google Monopoly**

December 17 2020 1:19 PM



**Chicago** – Attorney General Kwame Raoul today joined a bipartisan coalition of 38 attorneys general in filing a lawsuit against Google LLC, alleging that the company illegally maintains its monopoly power over general search engines and related advertising markets through a series of anticompetitive, exclusionary contracts and conduct. The lawsuit alleges that Google has deprived consumers of competition that could lead to greater choice, innovation and better privacy protections. Furthermore, Raoul and the coalition allege that Google has exploited its market position to accumulate and leverage data to the detriment of consumers.

“For years, Google has engaged in anticompetitive behavior and conduct to illegally maintain its monopoly as an online search engine,” Raoul said. “Google’s actions have not only negatively affected competition, advertisers, and business, but have also risked the privacy of consumers and left them with few alternatives to Google’s platform. Consumers deserve to have a choice and the confidence that they are getting the best search results, not just the results that Google wants them to see. I am joining my colleagues in this lawsuit to ask the court to end Google’s monopoly and remove the barriers it created for potential competitors.”

[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 a similar, pending U.S Department of Justice (DOJ) case. Google is specifically charged with violating Section 2 of the Sherman Act.

In the complaint, Raoul and the coalition allege 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 advertisers and consumers.
- Discriminates against specialized search sites – such as those that provide travel, home repair, or entertainment services – by depriving them of access to prime real estate because these competing sites threaten Google’s revenue and dominant position.

Raoul and the coalition also argue that more competition in the general search engine market would benefit consumers through improved privacy protections and more targeted results and opportunities for consumers. Competitive general search engines also could offer better-quality advertising and lower prices to advertisers. The complaint

further alleges that the company seeks to deploy the same exclusionary contracting tactics to monopolize the emerging ways consumers access general search engines, such as through their home smart speakers, televisions, or in cars.

The attorneys general also expand on the DOJ's complaint to explain that Google's acquisition and command of vast amounts of data – obtained increasingly because of consumers' lack of choice – has fortified Google's monopoly and created significant barriers for potential competitors and innovators.

In today's lawsuit, Raoul and the coalition seek to stop Google's illegal conduct and restore a competitive marketplace, and unwind any advantages that Google gained as a result of its anticompetitive conduct, including divestiture of assets as appropriate. Finally, they ask the court to provide any additional relief it determines appropriate, as well as reasonable fees and costs to the states.

Joining Raoul in today's lawsuit is a bipartisan group of attorneys general from Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia and Wyoming.