

# Raoul Announces Multistate Settlement With Google After Investigation Into Location Tracking Practices

November 14 2022 11:04 AM



**SPRINGFIELD** – Attorney General Kwame Raoul today announced a more than \$391 million bipartisan national settlement with Google after an investigation by Raoul and a coalition of attorneys general revealed Google misled consumers about its location tracking practices. Illinois will receive more than \$19.5 million under the settlement.

“Consumers were deceived by Google as to when their location was being tracked and how that information was used,” Raoul said. “With the proliferation of smart devices

that collect increased data on its users, today's announcement highlights the need for updated privacy laws that more effectively protect consumers."

Raoul and a coalition of 38 attorneys general opened an investigation into Google following a 2018 Associated Press article that revealed Google recorded movements "even when you explicitly tell it not to." The article focused on two Google account settings: Location History and Web & App Activity. According to the article, the Location History default setting is "off" unless a user turns on the setting. However, Web & App Activity, a separate account setting, is automatically turned on when users set up a Google account, which includes all Android phone users.

Google uses the personal and behavioral data it collects to build detailed user profiles and target ads on behalf of its advertising customers. Location data is among the most sensitive and valuable personal information Google collects, with even limited amounts of location data capable of exposing a person's identity and routines that can be used to infer personal details.

Raoul and the coalition alleged that since at least 2014, Google violated state consumer protection laws by misleading consumers about its location tracking practices in various ways. Specifically, Google caused users to be confused about the scope of the Location History setting, the fact that the Web & App Activity setting existed and also collected location information, and the extent to which consumers who use Google products and services could limit Google's location tracking by adjusting their account and device settings.

Under the settlement, Google has agreed to a series of provisions designed to give consumers more transparency into Google's practices, including showing additional information whenever users turn an account setting on or off; making key information about location tracking unavoidable for users (i.e., not hidden); and creating an enhanced "Location Technologies" webpage where users can get detailed information about the type(s) of location data Google collects and how it's used.

The settlement also puts limits on Google's use and storage of certain types of location information and requires Google account controls to be more user-friendly.

Joining Raoul in leading the settlement negotiations are the attorneys general of Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Tennessee. Joining Raoul in announcing the final settlement include the attorneys general of Alabama, Alaska, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan,

Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Virginia and Wisconsin.

Chief Privacy Officer Matt Van Hise, Bureau Chief Beth Blackston and Privacy Counsel Carolyn Friedman handled the settlement for Raoul's Consumer Fraud Bureau.