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Ticket Sellers Sue D.C. to Strike Down Price Cap That Protects Primary Ticketers at the Expense of Fans

Lawsuit warns that putting price controls on concert tickets could limit competition, strengthen dominant primary ticket companies and put millions in consumer savings at risk.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Association of Ticketing Professionals (NATP) and two of its members, ASC Ticket Company and Stage Front Tickets, Inc., have filed a federal lawsuit to strike down the District of Columbia’s new price cap on ticket resales, a law that limits what fans can pay on the secondary market while leaving primary ticket prices completely unrestricted.

The lawsuit alleges that D.C.’s price cap is unconstitutionally vague, illegally regulates interstate commerce, and exceeds the Council’s authority under the D.C. Home Rule Act, as it is so loosely drafted that it could reach tickets sold outside D.C. The suit also challenges the unequal treatment of ticket sellers, with resale transactions subject to price controls while primary ticket prices remain unrestricted. The plaintiffs are seeking a preliminary injunction temporarily barring enforcement of the price cap to prevent fans and businesses from suffering while the court considers the legal challenge.

“Let’s be clear—this law is not about protecting fans. This legislation was pushed by local venues that are adamantly against competition. A price cap doesn’t make tickets cheaper. It drives ticket resales off legitimate, guaranteed platforms and into back alleys where fans have no protection at all. The District just won a jury verdict proving Ticketmaster’s monopoly hurts fans, and then the Council turned around and passed a law that shields local venues from price competition by making that monopoly stronger. We’re going to court to stop it,” said Gary Adler, Executive Director of NATP.

According to industry data cited in support of the lawsuit, fans attending events in the District saved more than \$6.1 million in 2024 by purchasing resale tickets rather than buying through primary ticketing channels, with an average savings of \$13 per purchase. The price cap could put those savings at risk by discouraging legitimate sellers from serving the D.C. market, leaving fans with fewer places to shop and potentially higher ticket prices. Professional ticket sellers also help fans compare ticket prices and seating options while providing customer service and purchase guarantees.

The District’s own officials warned it about the risks of the price cap. D.C.’s Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development cautioned that the cap could expose consumers to “financial losses” by driving transactions toward “unregulated markets.” The Council’s own Committee on Public Works and Operations stripped the price cap from the bill, warning that it could lead to “further consolidating monopoly power in the primary market.” Despite those concerns, the full Council restored the provision.

The price cap law also reveals a contradiction in the District’s ticket policy. The District of Columbia joined an antitrust lawsuit against Live Nation and Ticketmaster, and in April, Attorney General Brian Schwalb announced that a federal jury had found Live Nation had illegally monopolized the live-entertainment industry and concert-ticketing services. His office says Ticketmaster is the exclusive ticketer for nearly all sizable venues in the District and has repeatedly framed the case around restoring competition and choice for fans. But the price cap limits competition in the ticket market and hurts fans as a result.

"I've worked in the ticketing industry for more than 20 years, and competition is essential to giving fans more choices. This law threatens to make it harder for legitimate businesses to operate and could ultimately leave consumers in D.C. with fewer options," said Lee Shenker, Vice President and General Counsel at ASC Ticket Company.

The lawsuit targets the resale price restriction, not provisions intended to combat ticket fraud, deceptive practices or other unlawful conduct.

"Fans don't need the government telling them where they can shop or what a ticket is worth. They need more choices, not fewer, and that's exactly what this lawsuit is fighting for," Adler said.

Plaintiffs in the lawsuit are represented by Jessie K. Liu, Justin V. Shur, and Hundley Poulson of Liu Shur Kravis LLP.

About NATP

Founded in 1994, the National Association of Ticketing Professionals (NATP) represents professional ticketing businesses across the United States. NATP members help fans find tickets, compare seating options and prices, and purchase tickets through legitimate businesses that provide customer service and consumer protections. The association promotes ethical business practices, professional standards and a free and competitive ticket marketplace. Members agree to follow the NATP Code of Ethics, including a prohibition on the use of ticket-buying bots and a 200% order guarantee.

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