

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why is live event ticketing broken?

Live Event ticketing is broken because the Live Nation/Ticketmaster (LNE/TM) monopoly controls every step of the live event marketplace – from artist management to promotion to venues to ticketing. As the NY Times said, “The merger of Live Nation and Ticketmaster united the world’s most powerful concert promoter and the biggest ticketing platform, creating a colossus without equal.”

Venues sell tickets, but due to LNE/TM’s dominance, they have little choice in which ticketing vendor to use. LNE/TM strong arms venues into exclusively using Ticketmaster or those venues face losing access to the artists LNE manages and the tours they promote. Irvine City Councilmember, Tammy Kim said on their proposed venue, “That was absolutely discussed by Live Nation, in that they simply won’t throw acts our way.”

It is estimated that Ticketmaster controls 80% of primary ticket sales in the United States and is one of the largest players in the resale market as well.

LNE/TM also restricts what fans can do with their tickets after they have rightfully purchased them. Be it resale or transfer restrictions, LNE/TM limits the ability of consumers to transfer their tickets to edge out competition.

Q. Has this broken system hurt consumers/fans?

Yes. Lack of competition benefits the LNE/TM monopoly at the expense of fans, who are faced with higher prices and less access to events. Since LNE/TM merged in 2010, ticket prices have increased 140% when adjusted for inflation.

Buying tickets can be a frustrating and arduous process for fans. They face hours of waiting in a queue and sites that crash, and many fans get left behind because they can’t sit for hours on a website while they’re at work. And if they are lucky enough to get a ticket, they are not guaranteed the right to donate, gift, or sell their tickets unless permitted by the original ticket seller.

Unlike states like Colorado, Illinois, and New York, California consumers have no rights with respect to the tickets they buy.

Q. How do we fix live event ticketing?

The number one thing we can do to fix live event ticketing is to increase competition. Opening the marketplace to competition will reduce fees and improve user experience, making event attendance easier and more accessible. Removing ticket sale exclusivity will enable venues, promoters, artists, and event organizers to reach more fans through multiple retail partners.

Consumers deserve a choice about where to shop, and competition will incentivize ticket sellers to improve the fan experience through better service, more transparency, and lower fees. Fans should have enhanced rights that ensure they have control over tickets they have rightfully purchased.

We should also create a system so that every ticket sold or resold by participating retail platforms can be verified by a single source. Verification will help address incidents of fraud and speculative ticket sales and create a more connected and innovative marketplace to fight illegal bots.

Q. Why is the LNE/TM monopoly under federal investigation?

In 2010, 50 members of the US House opposed the merger of Live Nation and Ticketmaster, citing concerns over the creation of a live event monopoly. Today, the conversation has only accelerated as consumers face the fallout from a lack of competition in the marketplace. LNE/TM is under increased scrutiny by both the United States Dept. of Justice and Congress for anti-competitive and anti-consumer practices.

The United States Department of Justice is investigating LNE/TM for alleged anti-competitive and anti-consumer behavior. And a United States Senate investigative subcommittee was recently forced to subpoena LNE/TM to provide documents and internal communications about ticket pricing, fees, and resale practices, as well as the company's relationship with artists and venues.

LNE/TM's position in the market led Sen. Amy Klobuchar to remark:

"I just want to dispel this notion that this is not a monopoly and then we can go from there about solutions"

Q. What are the differences between primary and secondary ticket sales?

Primary sales for live event ticketing are when tickets are originally sold. An artist and their promoter will set the price for a ticket, while the venue sells the ticket. Because of the LNE/TM monopoly, the vast majority of live events sell tickets through Ticketmaster. There is virtually no competition in the primary market.

Secondary sales are when the original purchasers of a ticket resell their tickets. Resellers can be fans selling to other fans, professional ticket sellers, or sometimes industry insiders and primary ticket partners. The reseller sets the price of the ticket, not the online platform they use. The secondary marketplace is the only place in live event ticketing where there is real competition and multiple purchase options, which drives down prices. Ticketmaster also participates in the secondary marketplace.

Q. Why is it important for fans to be able to control their ticket?

Consumers should have the right to do what they want with the tickets they have rightfully purchased. They should be able to sell, donate, or give their ticket away should they choose. But today, unlike states like Colorado, Illinois, and New York, California consumers have no rights with respect to the tickets they buy.

Ticket resale plays a valuable role in providing competition and creating additional ways for everyday fans to find tickets who would otherwise miss out. LNE/TM limits ticket transfer to edge out competition and further entrench their monopoly. Legislation should give consumers control over the tickets they purchase, not give more power to monopolies.

Q. Ticketmaster says that the resale marketplace is the problem. Is that true?

LNE/Ticketmaster is pointing the finger at the resale marketplace to try to turn the attention away from themselves, their own inaction, and the myriad of investigations into their anti-competitive practices.

The truth is that ticket resale plays a valuable role in providing competition and additional ways for everyday fans to buy tickets who would otherwise miss out. Not every fan can afford a season ticket package, but many might be able to save up for a game.

It also recognizes that life happens. A fan may buy a ticket to see their favorite artist, but then can't go due to work or a health issue or any number of reasons. People should have the opportunity to resell their tickets if needed – not be forced to lose hundreds of dollars because the LNE/TM monopoly wants to dictate what fans do with their tickets.