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April 16, 2020

Hon. Letitia James
New York State Attorney General
The Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Attorney General James:

I write to you amidst the Coronavirus pandemic where egregious, anti-consumer practices in the ticketing industry are being brought to light. During my time in the Legislature, my office, as well as my colleagues on the Investigations and Government Operations Committee, have received countless complaints from constituents regarding deceptive consumer practices occurring in the ticketing industry. Most recently, however, Ticketmaster has unscrupulously altered existing policies amidst the public health emergency to seemingly avoid reimbursing customers. I am writing to respectfully request your office open a formal inquiry in order to examine whether Ticketmaster's impropriety rises to the level of criminal or civil penalties.

As we are unfortunately aware, the Coronavirus pandemic has halted the operations of many businesses across the world, including the live event industry. Thousands of concerts, shows, and sporting events have been cancelled or postponed, which has led to a justifiable increase in refund requests from ticket holders. Amidst this ongoing public health emergency, Ticketmaster silently and abruptly altered its reimbursement policy on March 14 in order to seemingly avoid repaying consumers. Previously, reimbursements were offered if an event was "postponed, rescheduled or canceled" whereas, after the sudden change, refunds are now only offered if an event is canceled; if an event is indefinitely postponed, as has often been the case during the pandemic, concerns are mounting that reimbursements will not be issued.

Ticketmaster is allegedly preying on consumers during a time of significant crisis. They are potentially withholding billions of dollars that many now need to survive this pandemic.

I respectfully urge your office to take any and all steps necessary to protect consumers in the live event ticket industry. The Senate Investigations and Government Operation's broader investigation into the industry, which was launched earlier this year, will also be incorporating an examination into these recent practices that have stemmed from the pandemic.

Sincerely,

James Skoufis
Senator, 39th District