

Wisconsin Senate Committee on Utilities, Technology, and Tourism

January 13, 2026

Testimony of Dustin Brighton, Coalition for Ticket Fairness SB. 580

Introduction

Good morning, Chair Bradley and members of the Committee. My name is Dusty Brighton, and Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on Senate Bill 580

We applaud the legislature's pro-consumer focus and commitment to ensuring fair access to live entertainment. These are goals we strongly share, and we would welcome the opportunity to work with the legislature to develop balanced, pro-consumer policies that truly expand fairness.

Although well-intended, certain provisions within SB 580 will have significant unintended consequences, most notably cementing Ticketmaster's indisputable monopoly in the ticketing market. To be sure, unless this legislation addresses the broader anti-competitive realities of the ticketing marketplace, in particular Ticketmaster's overwhelming dominance, it will certainly inflict additional harm on the very consumers that this legislation was envisioned to protect.

The State of the Ticketing Market - Ticketmaster

For context, ticketing market is adversely dominated by one actor – Ticketmaster, which is owned by Live Nation Entertainment Inc. Live Nation has a market capitalization of approximately \$36 billion and currently controls nearly 80% of the primary ticketing market in the United States.

Because of this dominance, Ticketmaster not only manages the vast majority of initial ticket sales, but also dictates the terms of those sales, what fees are charged, whether tickets can be transferred, and whether venues may work with any competing platform.

With its market share, Ticketmaster pressures artists and venues into exclusive contracts that foreclose rivals, reduce consumer choice, and inflate prices, exercising its monopolistic power. Between 2019 and 2024, consumers spent more than \$82 billion on Ticketmaster tickets, including \$16.4 billion in fees alone. In short, when it comes to manipulating the ticketing market and injuring consumers, there is no single entity more culpable than Ticketmaster.

This is not just our view. It is the basis of multiple federal actions. In May 2024, under President Biden, the U.S. Department of Justice, joined by the Attorneys General of 30 state, including the

District of Columbia, filed suit against Live Nation, alleging, among other matters, that Live Nation is guilty of (i) excessive fees and price inflation, (ii) restricting ticket transferability, and (iii) restricting competition.

In addition, just last month, the Federal Trade Commission, joined by seven states, brought yet another lawsuit against Live Nation, alleging deceptive and anti-competitive resale practices aimed at suppressing competition and leaving consumers with fewer choices and higher prices. Specifically, the FTC alleges that Live Nation (i) engages in hidden fees & deceptive pricing, (ii) conspires with select brokers to circumvent its own stated limitations on ticket purchases, which pushes consumers out of the primary market, (iii) fails to enforce the requirements of the federal Better Online Ticket Sales (BOTS) Act of 2016, even though it has the ability to do so.

Together, these lawsuits allege, among other things, a long pattern of deceptive pricing, profiting from the reseller market and bots, exclusionary contracts, and other forms of anticompetitive conduct.

As drafted, this legislation will do nothing to nothing to reduce Ticketmaster's market power. Indeed, it risks cementing this power by codifying policies that ultimately raise costs for fans while limiting alternatives.

Now, I'd like to turn my attention to certain provisions within the SB 580.

Resale Ban Unless Authorized

One of the central provisions of SB 580 is the imposition on the ban of resale unless authorized. At first glance, this may sound consumer-friendly, but in reality, it does nothing to address the true driver of inflated costs, Ticketmaster's online purchase fees.

This bill would possibly leave Ticketmaster free to add unlimited fees on top of the initial ticket price. According to the FTC lawsuit, filed after the introduction of legislation elsewhere, Ticketmaster's fees can reach **44% on top of the initial ticket price.**⁵ That means resellers generally would not be able to participate in the market unless authorized, but Ticketmaster can still tack on fees four times higher, leaving fans with no protection against the real source of inflated prices.

As a result, the bill locks in Ticketmaster's broken pricing model. Consumers would remain exposed to unchecked charges, while independent resellers are punished under limits that do not apply to the dominant players. The CTF opposes legislation of this type, particularly those that are applicable solely to resellers. Instead, we believe that the real solution is to require full price disclosure upfront, eliminate restrictions on transferability, and guarantee refunds from both primary sellers and resellers. We fully support consumers' right to know the complete "all in" cost of a ticket upfront, without hidden add-ons. We would also point to examples of legislation in other states that adopt this approach.

Transferability

True consumer protection depends on free markets and transparency. That means ensuring fans can transfer or resell tickets without restrictions. Unfortunately, the bill's current structure opens the door for Ticketmaster and venues to manipulate the process using their market power to restrict or pressure venues from allowing transferability, whether they want to or not.

Through Ticketmaster's "SafeTix" system, a rotating barcode tied to the Ticketmaster app, Ticketmaster claims to protect against fraud. In reality, according to the US Department of Justice, SafeTix prevents fans from transferring tickets outside of Ticketmaster's platform, forcing resale to occur only within its controlled exchange, where the company collects additional fees.⁶

This practice locks fans into Ticketmaster's ecosystem, eliminates competition, and further inflates prices. This is another demonstration of the power Ticketmaster has to restrict and punish venues into only using their services. As drafted, this bill could permit TicketMaster to utilize its market power to force restrictions on the transferability of tickets.

We support the right of consumers to transfer or resell their private property without being subjected to the TicketMaster's or others' predatory platform and excessive fees.

Regulation

The CTF is open to a meaningful and appropriate regulation that applies to **both** primary sellers and resellers.

If the goal is to strengthen consumer protections, then the CTF respectfully suggests that policy provisions that apply to secondary sellers must also apply to primary sellers.

Finally, if the purpose of the legislation is to monitor the wellbeing of the ticketing market, CTF urges the legislature to include disclosure requirements for venues and primary sellers, including exclusive venue contracts. The recent lawsuit filed by the DOJ details how Live Nation uses its control over promotions and venues to force artists and venues into long-term exclusive deals, foreclosing rivals and stifling competition.

Conclusion

It is true that some independent primary sellers operate without Ticketmaster, but they are the exception. Ticketmaster still controls close to 80% of the primary market, and that dominance defines the landscape. Those exceptions do not change the larger reality: the central issue before us, and the one we should all agree on, is protecting the consumer.

The real solution is to end the monopolistic practices of Ticketmaster and Live Nation, require full and transparent price disclosures, and establish fair rules that apply equally across the market.

You will hear today that secondary ticketing platforms like us are the problem. In reality, as the recent DOJ and FTC lawsuits confirm, those voices are often under pressure from Live Nation's overwhelming influence. The real barrier to a fair ticket market is not competition among resellers, it is the unchecked power of Ticketmaster and influence on venues.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.