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## Writing Assessment

### Client Background:

This client is a mid-sized independent concert venue operator based in Columbus, OH. The client is concerned that increasing market concentration in live entertainment is limiting competition, reducing venue autonomy, and creating an uneven playing field for independent operators.

### Key Insights Used:

1. Consumers and artists will benefit from increased competition in event ticketing.
2. Policymakers and regulators should enact policies, either at the state or federal levels, to protect consumers, artists and the secondary market of ticket sales.
3. **Market concentration and vertical integration in live entertainment limit choice for venues and artists, restricting competition and undermining a fair, open marketplace.**

### Task A: Op Ed

Running a concert venue used to be about booking the right artists and delivering the best and most reasonably priced experience for fans. Today, too much of that process is shaped by decisions made far outside the walls of venues like mine, often by Ticketmaster and its parent company, Live Nation.

As an independent venue owner in Ohio, I work with various promoters and artists on a daily basis. What has become clear is that the live entertainment market is no longer operating like a typical competitive system. The choices available to venues like mine, and in turn to fans and artists, are more limited than they should be.

Many Americans first became aware of this issue after the failed ticket presale for [Taylor Swift's Eras Tour](#) in late 2022. Since then, Congress has held hearings. Regulators began asking questions. But this was not an isolated issue; it was just a symptom of a larger structural problem.

At its core, the issue is straightforward: Ticketmaster, through its integration with Live Nation, operates across all layers of the industry, and when one company holds that level of influence, it raises serious questions about whether competition can function properly. It's why policymakers should investigate Ticketmaster to ensure a fair and open ticket marketplace.

Federal enforcement actions suggest these concerns are not hypothetical. The Department of Justice (DOJ) has brought an [antitrust case](#) against Live Nation and Ticketmaster, alleging that Ticketmaster controls a significant share of primary ticketing for major venues and relies on long-term exclusive contracts that can last years, limiting alternatives for venues like mine. In September 2025, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) [also sued Live Nation and Ticketmaster](#) over alleged deceptive pricing and

ticket-resale practices, including claims that mandatory fees could reach very high percentages and that ticket limits were misrepresented.

This is not a consumer issue. It is a market structure issue. Ticketmaster and Live Nation allow it to influence promotion and ticket distribution in ways that reduce independent venues' and artists' ability to negotiate freely.

Policymakers are already moving in this direction. Aside from litigation, the FTC has implemented [new transparency rules](#) requiring “all-in” pricing. Congress has also [advanced bipartisan legislation](#) to improve ticketing practices. However, these are all just baseline efforts to ensure Ticketmaster operates within a more transparent marketplace.

Some argue that Ticketmaster's scale brings efficiency. That its integration with Live Nation helps streamline reliability. There is truth to that. But efficiency should not and does not eliminate the need for competition. When a company operates at the scale Ticketmaster does, it becomes even more important to ensure competitors are not squeezed out.

Independent venue owners are not asking for special treatment. We are asking for a fair opportunity to compete. We are asking for ticketing partners to be chosen based on merit, not necessity. And most of all, we are looking to operate in a market where Ticketmaster is one option among many, not the default gatekeeper.

An investigation into Ticketmaster is not about punishing success, but about ensuring that success has not come at the expense of competition.

For the sake of venues, artists, fans, and the future of live music, the federal government must take a closer look. Let's ensure the ticket marketplace works for all.