

Ex-Texas enforcer that oversaw Google probe opens firm

Ben Remaly

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The former head of the State of Texas' antitrust investigation into Google has opened his own legal practice in Austin.

On Sunday, Darren McCarty unveiled the founding of [McCarty Law PLLC](#), listing antitrust litigation as one of the firm's primary areas of focus.

“What we’re really trying to do is build a firm in Austin to service the growing legal needs of a sophisticated business community, especially one that revolves around technology,” McCarty said.

McCarty served as deputy attorney general for civil litigation in the office of the Texas attorney general from 2018 until his resignation in November.

He was one of seven members of the agency’s front office who resigned, were fired or were placed on leave after accusing Texas attorney general Ken Paxton of bribery and abuse of office to benefit a political donor. Paxton has denied any wrongdoing in the matter, which is reportedly being examined by federal investigators.

Before leaving, McCarty oversaw Texas’ antitrust investigation into Google, which was first announced in September 2019. That probe resulted in a lawsuit this December in which 10 state attorneys general [accused](#) the company of illegally maintaining monopolies over certain digital advertising markets.

McCarty has been advising clients since December but did not make an announcement until this weekend that he had opened a firm.

He said his firm will regularly focus on advising clients on both government and private antitrust matters and that he expects to take on work for plaintiffs and defendants.

McCarty – who spent more than 17 years in the Dallas offices of Gibson Dunn & Crutcher and Alston & Bird – said he wants his firm to have significant trial experience, which he believes has been waning at some private practices.

“We want to be a firm that has the capability of doing all the complex procedural work and, at the same time, have all our lawyers be highly qualified to walk into any courtroom in America,” he said.

Right now, it is just McCarthy and Cristina Moreno, who previously served in the DOJ's organised crime and racketeering section and as an assistant US attorney in the US Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida.

McCarthy said the firm has been conservative in building its team during the pandemic, but that it is looking to grow.

While he was with the Texas attorney general's office, McCarty oversaw the enforcer's 12 civil divisions, including those focused on antitrust and consumer protection.

Paxton **initially led** a bipartisan coalition of nearly every US state in its investigation of Google's competitive practices related to online advertising and search.

At some point, Texas' probe splintered off into a group of 10 Republican state attorneys general that filed a lawsuit against Google focused on digital advertising markets. The state was also a plaintiff in the Department of Justice's monopolisation **case** against the company filed in October.

A bipartisan group of 38 states and territories **endorsed and advanced** the DOJ's lawsuit in their own complaint filed in December.

Paxton's former top lieutenant – who also resigned this autumn – told the *Associated Press* earlier this year that McCarty was scheduled to lead an in-house team against Google at trial.

Paxton has since hired two outside law firms – the Lanier Law Firm and Keller Lenkner – to bring the case and **asked** state legislators to cover \$43.3 million in costs.