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Attorney General Griffin Joins FTC and 12 States on Lawsuit to Block Veterinary Supplies Distributor Covetrus's $3.5 Billion Acquisition of Rival MWI

Griffin: 'My office will continue to fight against anticompetitive practices that hurt Arkansans'

LITTLE ROCK – Attorney General Tim Griffin today announced that Arkansas has joined the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and 12 other states in a lawsuit to block veterinary supplies distributor Covetrus Inc.'s proposed $3.5 billion acquisition of its closest competitor, MWI Veterinary Supply Inc.

Griffin issued the following statement:

"Competition is essential to keep costs down for Arkansas businesses and consumers. This proposed merger threatens to reduce competition in the veterinary supply market, which will drive up costs for veterinarians and the families who rely on them to care for their pets. My office will continue to fight against anticompetitive practices that hurt Arkansans."

In the complaint, the FTC and states allege that the proposed merger would combine the two largest veterinary supply distributors in the country, which would raise costs for veterinary clinics, decrease service quality, and increase prices for pet owners.

Covetrus and MWI supply veterinary clinics with pharmaceuticals, vaccines, surgical supplies, and other essential products. The companies compete directly to offer lower prices, discounts, rebates, and favorable service terms to veterinary practices across the country.

According to the complaint, competition between the two companies has intensified in recent years, resulting in lower prices and better terms for veterinary clinics. The proposed acquisition would eliminate that competition.

The complaint also alleges that significant barriers to entry make it difficult for new competitors to enter the veterinary supply distribution market. The merger would create highly concentrated markets for veterinary clinic distribution and distribution to large corporate veterinary accounts.

The lawsuit seeks to permanently block the proposed acquisition. The complaint was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York.

Joining Arkansas and the FTC in the lawsuit are the attorneys general of Arizona, California, Colorado, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, and Texas.

To view the complaint, click here.

About Attorney General Tim Griffin

Tim Griffin was sworn in as the 57th Attorney General of Arkansas on January 10, 2023, having previously served as the state's 20th Lieutenant Governor from 2015-2023. From 2011-2015, Griffin served as the 24th representative of Arkansas's Second Congressional District, where he served on the House Committee on Ways and Means, House Armed Services Committee, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, House Committee on Ethics and House Committee on the Judiciary while also serving as a Deputy Whip for the Majority.

Griffin is currently an officer in the Arkansas Army National Guard and holds the rank of colonel. Griffin served as an officer in the U.S. Army Reserve Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Corps for more than 28 years. In 2005, Griffin was mobilized to active duty as an Army prosecutor at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and served with the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) in Mosul, Iraq.

His previous assignments include serving as the Commander of the 2d Legal Operations Detachment in New Orleans, Louisiana; the Commander of the 134th Legal Operations

Detachment at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; and as a Senior Legislative Advisor to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness at the Pentagon. Griffin earned a master's degree in strategic studies as a Distinguished Honor Graduate from the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

Griffin also served as U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, and Special Assistant to the President and Deputy Director of Political Affairs for President George W. Bush; Special Assistant to Assistant Attorney General Michael Chertoff, Criminal Division, U.S. Department of Justice; Special Assistant U.S. Attorney, U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Arkansas; Senior Investigative Counsel, Government Reform and Oversight Committee, U.S. House of Representatives; and Associate Independent Counsel, Office of Independent Counsel David M. Barrett, In re: HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros.

Griffin is a graduate of Magnolia High School, Hendrix College in Conway, and Tulane Law School in New Orleans. He attended graduate school at Oxford University. He is admitted to practice law in Arkansas (active) and Louisiana (inactive). Griffin lives in Little Rock with his wife, Elizabeth, a Camden native, and their three children.

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