

A new bill would force Apple to allow third-party app stores

Representative Kat Cammack (R-FL) introduced a bill Tuesday that would require “large app store operators” like Apple to let users install third-party app stores and set them as their default. The bill, called the App Store Freedom Act, aims to “promote competition and protect consumers and developers in the mobile app marketplace,” according to a press release on Tuesday.

Though the bill doesn’t mention Apple by name, it carves out rules for “large app store operators,” which it defines as app stores having more than 100 million users in the US. The bill would target Google’s practices as well, as it would force major app stores to let developers use third-party payment systems.

It would also require Apple and Google to offer developers “equal access to interfaces, features, and development tools without cost or discrimination,” as well as allow users to remove or hide pre-installed apps. Violations of the bill would result in penalties from the Federal Trade Commission, along with an additional civil penalty of up to \$1 million for each violation.

“Dominant app stores have controlled customer data and forced consumers to use the marketplaces’ own merchant services, instead of the native, in-app offerings provided by the applications and developers themselves,” Cammack said in the press release. The results are higher prices and limited selections for consumers and anti-competitive practices for

developers that have stifled innovation.”

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