

High court weighs Georgia hospital merger

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(AP)—The Supreme Court is questioning a monopoly on hospital services in southwestern Georgia.

The justices on Monday heard arguments in the federal government's claim that two private corporations used a public hospital authority to complete a deal that left one company as the owner of the only two hospitals in Albany, Ga. The [Federal Trade Commission](#) says the deal violates federal antitrust law.

The question at the high court is whether an exception in antitrust law for actions taken by a state or its agencies—in this case, the hospital authority—shields the transaction from federal concerns.

Lower [federal courts](#) allowed Albany's Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital to buy Palmyra Medical Center from Hospital Corporation of America over the [ETC](#)'s objection.

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