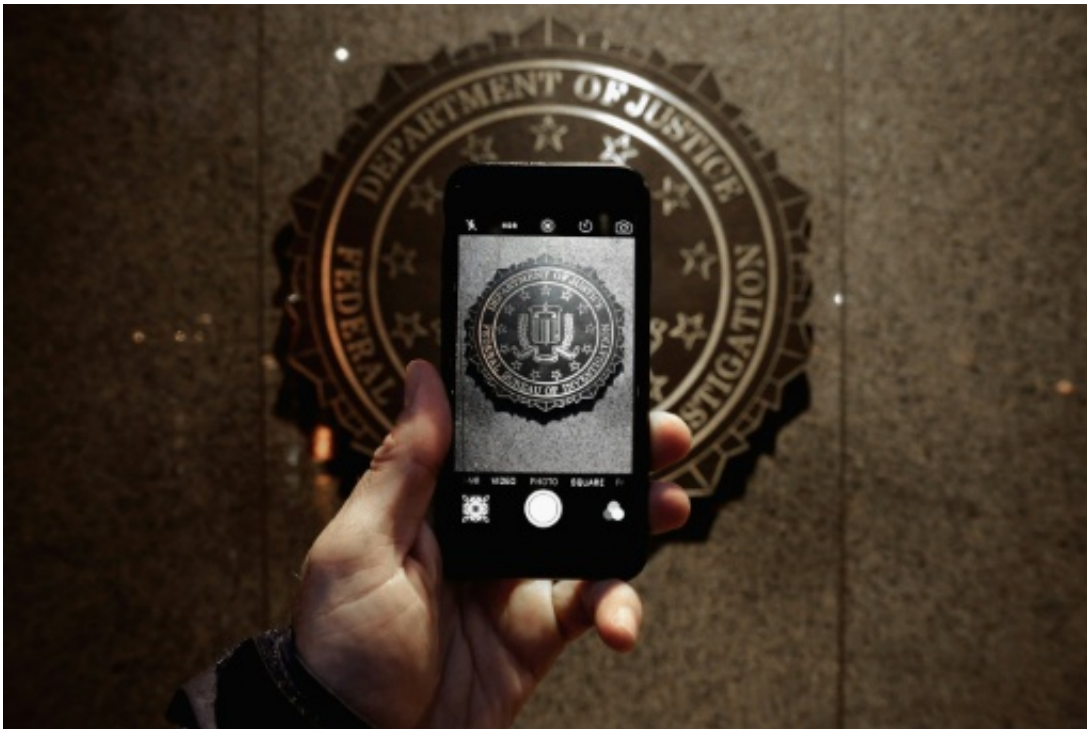


# Apple defends stand in Brooklyn case on iPhone access

April 15 2016

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Apple urged a federal court to reject efforts to force the company to help break into an iPhone as part of a New York drug investigation

Apple urged a federal court Friday to reject efforts to force the company to help break into an iPhone as part of a New York drug investigation.

In the latest case involving efforts to compel Apple to help law enforcement break encryption, the company said the court should simply

rule the assistance is unnecessary and not authorized by law.

The case in a [federal court](#) in Brooklyn comes weeks after the FBI dropped a hotly contested effort to require Apple to weaken the security of an iPhone used by one of the shooters in last year's attacks in San Bernardino, California.

In this case, Apple attorneys argued, the court can avoid a "constitutional thicket" and rule on "narrower grounds."

The Justice Department earlier this month appealed a decision by a US magistrate in Apple's favor, saying it still wants the company to extract pictures, text messages and other digital data from an iPhone used by someone accused of trafficking in methamphetamines.

The case is one of several pending in US courts as lawmakers and others debate whether Apple and other tech firms should be required to help break strong encryption, which in many cases allows only the user to access data, with no "keys" held by the company.

Apple said the government's interpretation of the All Writs Act—a 1789 law that gives the courts wide latitude to help law enforcement—was "soundly rejected" by the magistrate's ruling.

"It simply is not the case that federal courts can issue any order the executive branch dreams up unless and until Congress expressly prohibits it," the brief said. "That construction of the All Writs Act has it exactly backwards."

The company also said such an order isn't needed because of the "likely minimal evidentiary value of any data on the phone" given that all defendants have pleaded guilty.

The latest filing comes with Congress set to take up a bill that would require tech companies to provide technical assistance to law enforcement to help break encryption.

The proposal is facing intense criticism from civil liberties activists and [tech firms](#), while organizations backing [law enforcement](#) support the measure.

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