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The case dates from 2014 — Apple vs Federal Bureau of Investigation

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A similar case has been unfolding in NY, where a federal judge recently sided with Apple and refused the FBI's request to force the company to unlock an iPhone in a drug case. The US government unexpectedly asked for and received a postponement on the eve of the court date, saying an unidentified "outside party" had just shown it a possible way to unlock the iPhone without Apple's help. "If the method is viable, it should eliminate the need for the assistance from Apple", the government said.

Julian Sanchez, a privacy law expert at the libertarian-prone Cato Institute, said there may be one benefit for Apple in the government reversing course on the Apple case.

Other features include an updated CarPlay, for those who want to jam out to Apple Music while on the road, and a more personalized News app.

iPhone SE stands for iPhone Special Edition and it so fits the point too.

Apple did not immediately respond to the development.

"There's plenty of them out there that vendors don't know about", Kaplan said.

Bigger does not always mean better.

Cook went on to introduce a new, smaller iPhone that will start at \$399, seeking to jump-start sales of Apple's flagship product by enticing more users to upgrade, especially in high-growth markets such as China and India.

Apple has unveiled a new smartphone and tablet, both with smaller screens, as part of the company's efforts to retool its iPhones and iPads.

In that context, he said, the last-minute discovery of a possible solution and the cancellation of the hearing is "suspicious", and suggests the government might be anxious about losing and setting a bad precedent.

It has also been promoted by technical experts advising the American Civil Liberties Union, which has filed a court brief supporting Apple's position.

The FBI has been seeking to compel Apple to create an alternate operating system which could be installed on the phone and allow it to bypass a lockout feature and carry out a "brute force" hack to gain access to the phone's contents. Further, he said, "and I think they're going to love it".

An anti-government protester holding his iPhone with a sign "No Entry" during a demonstration near the Apple store on Fifth Avenue in NY on February 23, 2016. A spokesman for Apple said the company would not provide information about its other pending legal battles.

"We need to decide, as a nation, how much power the government should have over our data and our privacy".

The central conflict over whether law enforcement should be able to access protected data if it could help in criminal investigations or if the principle of digital privacy trumps that investigation, still exists even if the FBI does have a way into this particular iPhone. We owe it to our customers. In a news conference at Apple's Cupertino, California, headquarters, Cook said the company would stand fast.