

March 26, 2020

The Honorable William Barr
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Barr:

I wish to raise to your attention the frequent “price gouging” experienced by consumers as they purchase what they need to protect against the novel Coronavirus. I ask that the Department of Justice, under your leadership, take decisive action to coordinate a federal response to price gouging occurring in interstate commerce.

Thus far your department has acted to combat price gouging for medical supplies that may be currently being hoarded by companies, in contravention of the Defense Production Act. While this step is crucial for getting these much-needed medicines and personal protective equipment into the hands of healthcare professionals, it does little to impact the price gouging experienced by the average consumer

In New Jersey and other states, we have seen significant efforts being undertaken to combat price gouging in the physical retail marketplace. Ultimately state Attorneys General are best equipped to enforce price gouging at the markets, grocery stores and retail locations that Americans frequent. However, in heeding the direction of health professionals, Americans who are practicing social distancing are more often purchasing much needed supplies online.

While many online retailers are taking important, independent action to reduce unfair pricing in their marketplaces, the practice is still troubling pervasive and increased federal oversight is needed.

Should your department find that it is need of additional authorities to protect the consumer, I hope that you will let myself and my colleagues in Congress know. With a coordinated federal response to this growing issue I know that we can bring relief to American families.

Sincerely,



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress