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PRESS RELEASE

Justice Department and Federal Trade Commission Host First Strike Force on Unfair and Illegal Pricing Meeting

Thursday, August 1, 2024

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For Immediate Release

Office of Public Affairs

The Justice Department (DOJ) and Federal Trade Commission (FTC) virtually cohosted the first public meeting of the Strike Force on Unfair and Illegal Pricing (Strike Force) to discuss Strike Force enforcement actions taken to lower prices for Americans.

DOJ Acting Associate Attorney General Benjamin C. Mizer, Assistant Attorney General Jonathan Kanter of the Antitrust Division, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Brian Boynton, head of the Civil Division, and FTC Chair Lina M. Khan, along with other agencies on the Strike Force, assembled to highlight the following Strike Force enforcement actions:

- FTC Chair Khan highlighted the FTC's recent work to stop corporate lawbreaking that raises prices for Americans, including uncovering evidence of corporate conduct that may raise the price of gas, working to lower the cost of many asthma inhalers to just \$35 out-of-pocket, and making it easier for Americans to cancel online subscriptions they don't want. Chair Khan announced that she will ask the Commission to launch an inquiry into grocery prices in order to probe the tactics that big grocery chains use to hike prices and extract profits from everyday Americans at the checkout counter.
- DOJ Acting Associate Attorney General Mizer described DOJ's efforts to tackle unlawful behavior that affects the prices Americans pay for their groceries, transportation, and health care. Assistant Attorney General Kanter highlighted the historic and concrete actions Antitrust Division staff are undertaking to enforce the law and lower prices in higher education, housing, transportation, food, agriculture, live music, healthcare, and other vital industries. Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Boynton highlighted the Civil Division's work to combat fraudulent pricing schemes involving government agencies and financial institutions, as well as schemes designed to defraud consumers through unfair and deceptive marketing or billing practices.
- Deputy Secretary Xochitl Torres Small of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) highlighted the all-of-USDA approach to tackling food and agricultural pricing challenges for farmers and consumers alike, including an ongoing investigative study on retail concentration and market practices as well as landmark efforts to modernize the Packers & Stockyards Act rulebook and build a competition partnership with state attorneys general.
- Deputy Secretary Andrea Palm of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) spoke on HHS' work to make health care affordable, transparent, and fair for everyone. Increasing competition and transparency, lowering prescription drug prices, and expanding access to health care are key ways to make sure our health care system is working for all Americans.
- Acting General Counsel Subash Iyer of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) spoke about DOT's work to protect airline passengers from unfair practices that can make it more expensive to fly, including by proposing a ban on family seating junk fees and investigating Delta's refund, reimbursement, and customer service problems during the recent IT meltdown.
- Chair Gary Gensler of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) spoke about the SEC's work to address unfair, deceptive, and anticompetitive business practices. The SEC is the cop on the beat for the securities markets. The agency's rulemaking projects promote transparency, access, and fair dealing in the markets. And through market oversight, including examining registrants and reviewing tens of thousands of filings each year, the SEC guards against fraud and deceptive practices and promotes competition.
- Chair Jessica Rosenworcel of the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) spoke about the FCC's work to tackle unfair and deceptive pricing tactics in the communications sector, including by implementing new rules that will slash the exorbitant rates that incarcerated people and their families pay to stay connected.
- Director Rohit Chopra of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) spoke about the CFPB's work on junk fees, highlighting a report on school lunch fees, and a recently launched inquiry into junk fees in mortgage closing costs. The CFPB continues its work on all aspects of the credit card market, including looking into bait-and-switch rewards tactics, curbing excessive fees, and ensuring competition, all against the backdrop of interest rate margins hitting an all-time high. Additionally, the agency announced further scrutiny on the role of private equity investors in price gouging.

In March, at the sixth meeting of the White House Competition Council, President Biden [announced](#) the launch of the Strike Force to strengthen interagency efforts to root out and stop illegal corporate behavior that hikes prices on American families through anti-competitive, unfair, deceptive, or fraudulent business practices.

Updated August 1, 2024

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October 10, 2024

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