

# Trump DOJ On COVID 19 Price Gouging: Lots Of Talk, Little Action

## Executive Summary

As early as March 9, 2020, companies were asking the Trump administration to be proactive about price-gouging related to coronavirus. But despite having the National Center for Disaster Fraud housed within the Justice Department's criminal division, it took until March 24, 2020 for the Department of Justice to send a memo on price gouging to US Attorneys and to create a national task force dedicated to monitoring and prosecuting price gouging.

Since the creation of that national task force, the DOJ has publicly announced just three prosecutions of companies accused of price gouging practices and claimed in late April to be investigating 150 instances of price gouging and supplies hoarding. Meanwhile, state attorneys general have been doggedly pursuing price gouging cases and have managed floods of consumer complaints into their offices.

- New York: Over 7,000 complaints in less than three months' time
- New Jersey: Over 5,000 complaints in less than three months' time
- Pennsylvania: Over 5,000 Complaints received during the pandemic, a number the PA AG called "extraordinary"
- Texas: Over 10,000 complaints during the pandemic

With few other options, states and even municipalities have had to move quickly to address threats of price gouging in their communities. Through executive orders, the quick passage of legislation, and extensions of states of emergency, governors and state legislators had to create a patchwork of laws and rules to curb the unfair mark up of consumer goods across the country.

Recognizing the gap in coverage for consumers and the utter lack of prosecution at the federal level, private companies like 3M pursued price gougers in courts. Even Amazon and Congress have called for the creation of uniform laws around price gouging to fend off those who would take advantage in another pandemic.

Officials in the federal government have said they will "not tolerate" price gouging, but it appears that despite a torrent of complaints and the desperate need for prosecution, tolerance has been the modus operandi.

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## **Early March: Major Companies Asked Trump's Attorney General To Begin Fighting Price Gouging And Asking For Federal Coordination In The Effort—Even Reminding DOJ That It Already Had An Office Dedicated For That Very Purpose**

### **As Early As March 9, 2020, Large Companies Were Asking Trump's Attorney General To Fight Price Gouging Amidst The COVID-19 Crisis And Urging Federal Coordination Of State Attorneys General In The Effort**

**March 9, 2020: The Consumer Brands Association (CBA), Representing “Some Of America's Largest Consumer Brands,” Asked Attorney General William Barr To Fight Price Gouging Amidst The COVID-19 Crisis.** “A lobbying group representing some of America's largest consumer brands wants the Justice Department to stop retailers from jacking up prices on hand sanitizer, masks and other coronavirus essentials. The Consumer Brands Association – which represents brands and companies including Colgate-Palmolive, Coca-Cola, General Mills and Clorox – wrote a letter to Attorney General William Barr on Monday urging him to take action on sellers taking advantage of the coronavirus outbreak.” [[CNBC](#), 03/09/20]

**CBA Told William Barr, “If Price Gouging Continues Over The Coming Months, More And More Americans Will Become Unwilling And/Or Unable To Pay Excessive Prices.”** “If price gouging continues over the coming months, more and more Americans will become unwilling and/or unable to pay excessive prices for these products,’ writes Bryan Zumwalt, executive vice president of public affairs for the Consumer Brands Association.” [[CNBC](#), 03/09/20]

**CBA Asked William Barr For “National Coordination,” Writing, “We Urge DOJ To Coordinate With State Attorneys General To Ensure A Swift, Effective And Unified National Response To Price Gouging.”** “But Zumwalt of the CBA urged national coordination. ‘Given the rapid pace with which COVID-19 is spreading and the nationwide prevalence of price gouging, it is vital that the federal government play a role in these efforts,’ he wrote. ‘Accordingly, we urge DOJ to coordinate with state attorneys general to ensure a swift, effective and unified national response to price gouging,’ Zumwalt wrote.” [[CNBC](#), 03/09/20]

### **Meanwhile, A Trump Justice Department Office Dedicated To Fighting Price Gouging And Other Fraud During Disasters Was Apparently Sitting Idle**

**The CBA Letter Reminded William Barr That DOJ Has “Long Used Its Authority [...] To Connect The Public With Federal And State Resources To Combat Fraudulent Activity.”** “DOJ has long used its authority to warn the public of the risk of fraudulent activity in emergency situations and to connect the public with federal and state resources to combat fraudulent activity — including price gouging — in the face of national emergencies.” [[Consumer](#) Brands Association, [03/09/20](#)]

- **The CBA Included Footnotes Citing Press Releases From The DOJ's National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF).** [[Consumer](#) Brands Association, [03/09/20](#)]

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The NCDF, Established In 2005, Is “Focused On Finding And Prosecuting Those Who Take Advantage Of Disasters By Manipulation, Including Price Gouging.” “The Justice Department has had a department focused on fraud in the wake of disaster ever since the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The National Center for Disaster Fraud, which sits in the DOJ’s criminal division, is focused on finding and prosecuting those who take advantage of disasters by manipulation, including price gouging.” [CNBC, 03/09/20]

- **NCDF Was Established During a Previous National Disaster -- Hurricane Katrina.** “The NCDF was established in 2005 in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, when billions of dollars in federal disaster relief poured into the Gulf Coast region. It is the national coordinating agency for all man-made and natural disasters.” [U.S. Department of Justice, accessed 05/01/20]

**The NCDF “Provides National Coordination” Among Federal, State, Local, And Non-Profit Entities.** “NCDF provides national coordination for disaster fraud stakeholders, including federal, state, and local law enforcement and administrative agencies, governmental entities engaged in disaster relief, and non-profit organizations.” [U.S. Department of Justice, 05/01/20]

**By Late March: Hospital Leaders Were Claiming They Were Paying “50 Times More For Medical Supplies” And Local Officials Were Saying That Price Gouging Had “Hollowed Out Public Health Budgets”**

**Late March: Trump Claimed He Wouldn’t Tolerate Price Gouging As Hospital Leaders Were Paying 50 Times More For Medical Supplies And Public Health Funds Were Being “Hollowed Out.”**

**March 23, 2020: White House HEADLINE: “President Donald J. Trump Will Not Tolerate The Price Gouging And Hoarding Of Critical Supplies Needed to Combat the Coronavirus”** [White House – Fact Sheet, [3/23/20](#)]

**March 26, 2020: Hospitals Were Paying 50 Times More For Medical Supplies.** “Inside RWJBarnabas Health, New Jersey’s biggest health-care network, hospital leaders are so desperate for medical supplies to combat the coronavirus pandemic that they’re paying 50 times the usual price. [Washington Post, [3/27/20](#)]

- **Price Gouging “Hollowed Out Public Health Budgets.”** “The price gouging has hollowed out public health budgets, officials say. Minnesota-based industrial giant 3M, which makes hundreds of millions of N95 masks a year, [said in a statement Tuesday](#) it had “received reports of an increase in fraudulent and counterfeit” masks and was working to find and stop ‘pandemic profiteers.’” [Washington Post, [3/27/20](#)]

**Finally On March 24, The US Department Of Justice Issued A Memo On Price Gouging, But Searches Revealed Coverage Of Just Three Price Gouging Related Criminal Complaints Brought By The US Department Of Justice Through June 23, 2020**

**On March 24, Attorney General Bill Barr Issued A Memo To US Attorneys Saying The Justice Department Would “Aggressively Pursue” Those Who Hoard Critical Supplies Or Price Gouge and Created A New Federal Task Force**

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**March 24, 2020: Attorney General Bill Barr Issued Memo To US Attorneys Saying His Department Will “Aggressively Pursue Bad Actors Who Amass Critical Supplies.”** “In a memo to U.S. Attorneys, Attorney General Barr said, ‘we will aggressively pursue bad actors who amass critical supplies either far beyond what they could use or for the purpose of profiteering. Scarce medical supplies need to be going to hospitals for immediate use in care, not to warehouses for later overcharging.’” [[DOJ](#), 03/24/20]

**The “COVID-19 Hoarding and Price Gouging Task Force” Was Created.** According to the March 24 memo from Bill Barr: “I am directing the immediate creation of a task force to address COVID-19-related market manipulation, hoarding, and price gouging. The task force will develop effective enforcement measures, best practices, work closely with HHS as they designate particular items and equipment, and coordinate nationwide investigation and prosecution of these illicit activities. The task force will be led by Craig Carpenito, the United States Attorney in the District of New Jersey, with assistance as needed from the Antitrust Division’s Criminal Program. Each United States Attorney’s Office, as well as relevant Department components, are directed to designate an experienced attorney to serve as a member of the task force.” [[DOJ](#), 03/24/20]

- **As of the End of April, the Task Force Reportedly Was Investigating Just 150 Price Gouging and Hoarding Instances.** “To crack down on companies believed to be exploiting the situation, the Justice Department in late March set up a task force to identify companies selling their products for an increased rate. The Justice Department has more than 150 open price gouging and hoarding investigations through the task force, according to a DOJ official.” [CNN, [4/25/20](#)]

## **Over The Course Of April, The Department Of Justice Also Announced Several Additional “Task Forces” To Take On COVID19 Related Issues**

- **March 31, 2020: “Federal and State Officials Launch West Virginia Coronavirus Fraud Task Force”** [[DOJ](#), 03/31/20]
  - **WV Task Force Has Filed One Action:** “The United States filed a civil complaint here today to recover more than \$543,000 from individuals based in China who purported to sell face masks and N-95 respirators at inflated prices but never shipped the products. According to court documents, a number of fraudulent websites were established to purportedly sell N-95 respirators and other protective facemasks in February and March of 2020, just as the number of COVID-19 cases were rising in the United States and the demand for this type of equipment was increasing. The websites were a fraud.” [DOJ - Western District of Virginia, [6/10/20](#)]
- **April 8, 2020: “United States Attorney Michael Bailey and Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich Launch Covid-19 Fraud Task Force”** [[DOJ](#), 04/08/20]
- **April 24, 2020: “Top Federal and State Prosecutors Form Delaware COVID-19 Anti-Fraud Coalition”** [[DOJ](#), 04/24/20]

## **Since The Original March 24 Memo, DOJ Appears To Have Announced Just Three Price Gouging Criminal Complaints On Justice.gov**

- **April 24, 2020: The U.S. Attorney For The Eastern District Of New York Filed A Criminal Complaint Against Amardeep Singh For Violating The Defense Production Act By Hoarding Personal Protective Equipment To Sell At Marked-Up Prices.** [[Press Release](#), 04/24/20]

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- **April 28, 2020: An Unsealed Criminal Complaint From The U.S. Attorney For The Eastern District Of New York Charged Two Individuals With “Conspiracy To Violate The Defense Production Act By Seeking To Resell One Million KN95 Protective Masks In New York City At A 50 Percent Mark-Up.”** [[Press Release](#), 04/28/20]
- **May 26, 2020: US AG’s Office for Southern District of New York Arrested “The Mask Man” for 50% Markup on \$200K Worth of N95 Masks.** DOJ’s Southern District of New York “announced the arrest today of RICHARD SCHIRRIPA, a/k/a “the Mask Man,” a licensed pharmacist, on charges of violating the Defense Production Act by hoarding and price gouging scarce N95 masks; making two false statements to law enforcement; committing healthcare fraud; and committing aggravated identity theft. [...] He allegedly spent over \$200,000 accumulating N95 masks and then sold masks at inflated prices, charging customers up to 50% more than he had paid to acquire those N95 masks.” [[Press Release](#), 5/26/20]

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## **Into Mid-June: Tens of Thousands Of Price-Gouging Complaints Continued To Mount Across The Country**

### **New York: Over 7K Price-Gouging Complaints through June 6, 2020**

**New York City: Over 7,600 Price-Gouging Violations Filed, Including a \$11K Penalty to “Trump Pharmacy” in Jackson Heights.** “From March 5 through Wednesday, inspectors issued 7,600 [price-gouging violations](#) in stores from Manhattan to Queens selling goods like cleaning spray, cold and flu medication, hand sanitizer and protective masks and gloves at up to a 150 percent markup. With fines running as high as \$500, the violators could owe the city nearly \$4 million. Trump Pharmacy — no relation to the president — in Jackson Heights is facing an \$11,000 penalty for hawking cans of disinfectant spray for up to \$24, according to one complainant.” [[New York Post](#), 5/23/20]

**Issued More than 1,500 Cease-and-Desist Letters throughout New York.** “Attorney General James has been focused on protecting consumers and vulnerable communities since the onset of the pandemic. In response to more than 7,000 complaints of excessive prices, the OAG has issued more than 1,565 cease-and-desist orders to businesses that stand accused of violating the current law.” [[NY AG Press Release](#), 6/06/20]

**NY AG Filed a Price-Gouging Case against Quality King Distributors for Marking Up Prices on Lysol.** “First, in the morning, New York Attorney General Letitia James filed a price-gouging lawsuit against a grocery wholesaler, alleging that it unlawfully increased its wholesale prices of Lysol disinfectant products to grocery and discount stores in New York. [...] The New York attorney general’s complaint<sup>3</sup> alleges Quality King Distributors, Inc. (Quality King), a wholesaler, and its CEO, Glenn Nussdorf, unlawfully increased the prices Quality King charged its customers—neighborhood grocery and discount stores in New York—for Lysol disinfectant products.<sup>4</sup> According to the complaint, between January and April 2020, as the pandemic dramatically boosted demand for disinfectant products, Quality King more than doubled the price it charged its

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retailer customers for Lysol Disinfectant Spray, even though the prices charged by its suppliers hardly increased.” [Wilmer Hale, [6/02/20](#)]

## **New Jersey: 5,100+ Complaints As Of June 7, 2020**

**Over 5K Complaints of Price-Gouging against 2,600+ Businesses Resulting in 1,500+ Cease-and-Desist Letters to 108 Businesses and Online Marketplaces.** “Since around the time Gov. Phil Murphy declared a state of emergency on March 9, 1,586 letters have been issued. Prices generally cannot be increased more than 10% during an emergency, and violations can result in fines of \$10,000 or more. [...] In all, 108 businesses and online marketplaces have received a subpoena since March. There have been 5,161 complaints against 2,656 business locations, more than 80% of which allege unlawful price hikes on essential items like food, bottled water, cleaning products, and personal protective equipment such as masks, disinfectants, and sanitizers.” [NJ.com, [6/07/20](#)]

### **Among Items Overmarked Included Paper Towels, Bleach, Lysol, Hand Sanitizer:**

- “a deli selling small bottles of hand sanitizer for \$5.
- a grocery store charging \$4 for a roll of paper towels or \$48 for a package.
- a dollar store raising the price of rubbing alcohol from \$1.29 to \$8.99.
- a discount store increasing the price of bleach from \$3 to \$10.
- a pharmacy selling a can of Lysol disinfectant spray for \$12.
- a department store charging \$15 for an 80-count package of Lysol disinfectant wipes that normally cost \$5 or \$6.” [NJ.com, [6/07/20](#)]

## **Pennsylvania: More Than 5,000 Price-Gouging Complaints As Of June 5, 2020**

**June 5, 2020: Over 5,000 Price-Gouging Complaints Sent to PA AG’s Office and 27 Businesses Identified as Possible Price Gougers.** “[The State Attorney General’s office] received more than 5,000 complaints. Of those, 466 cease and desist letters were issued, subpoenas were sent to 200 targets for further investigation, and the office identified 27 businesses where they believe price gouging occurred, Attorney General Josh Shapiro said Friday.” [LeHigh Valley Live, [6/05/20](#)]

- **PA: Doubling Price of Face Masks, Upcharging Bottled Water, Raising the Prices of Paper Towels.** “One store in Philadelphia doubled the price for a pack of face masks to \$50. Another charged \$16 for 24 bottles of water that typically sell for less than \$10. In Chester, a grocery store hiked the price for a six-pack of paper towels from \$7 to \$10. Those are just some of the almost 4,500 complaints that Pennsylvanians have filed with the state Attorney General’s office claiming price gouging during [the coronavirus pandemic](#).” [Philadelphia Inquirer, [4/29/20](#)]
- **PA: A Quick Stop Mini Mart Settled a Case Where It Was Selling 500mL Hand Sanitizer Bottles for \$20.** “Quick Stop Mini Mart on North Seventh Street in Allentown was one of those complaints. Investigators said the store was selling 500mL (16.9-ounce) bottles of “Chinese Letter Hand Sanitizer” for \$20 apiece. As part of an [Assurance of Voluntary Compliance](#) agreement, the convenience store agreed to pay \$1,421 to settle the allegations.” [LeHigh Valley Live, [6/05/20](#)]
- **Pennsylvania’s Attorney General Called The Number Of Complaints “Extraordinary.”** “‘We’ve never received this many comments or tips about a specific subject matter,’ Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro said in a recent interview. He called the volume of complaints ‘extraordinary.’” [Philadelphia Inquirer, [4/29/20](#)]

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## **Florida: 4,400+ Price-Gouging Complaints as of May 12, 2020**

**More than 4,400 Complaints of Price Gouging.** “In the two months since Attorney General Ashley Moody [launched](#) Florida’s Price Gouging Hotline, her office has received roughly 4,400 consumer reports about price gouging on essential items. [...] Thus far, 70 subpoenas have been issued for further investigations and more than \$497,000 worth of refunds has been secured. Additionally, more than 198 online posts have been deactivated for “outrageous” pricing.” [Florida Politics, [5/12/20](#)]

**FL AG Contacted 6,300 Businesses about Price-Gouging Allegations for Items Like Masks and Cleaning Supplies for Nearly \$500K Returned to Citizens.** “Floridians have received nearly \$500,000 in refunds from businesses after allegations of inflated prices linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, new numbers show. The state’s price-gouging hotline has been contacted about 4,400 times, and more than \$497,000 has been returned to consumers since a state of emergency was declared in March because of the virus. Attorney General Ashley Moody’s office has contacted 6,300 businesses about price-gouging allegations related to products such as protective equipment.” [WCTV, [5/13/20](#)]

## **Texas: About 10,000 Complaints As Of May 25, 2020**

**Up to 10,000 Price-Gouging Complaints In Texas.** “Up to ten thousand complaints of price gouging during the pandemic have been received by the Texas Attorney General’s office. Attorney General Ken Paxton said each complaint is investigated and several lawsuits have been filed. [...] He continued, once the disaster declaration over, they will continue to investigate the claims made during the corona crisis.” [KLBJ, [5/25/20](#)]

## **Kentucky: 2,500+ Complaints As Of April 30, 2020**

**April 30, 2020: Over 2,500 Price-Gouging Complaints In Kentucky.** “It’s one thing to be concerned about contracting the virus. It’s another thing to try have to think about financial hardships that come along with being subjected to some kind of fraud or COVID-19 scam,” said Daniel Cameron, Kentucky Attorney General. Cameron’s office is responsible for investigating price gouging. He says they’ve received over 2,500 complaints so far.” [WKBO, [04/30/20](#)]

## **Arkansas: 2K-3K Complaints by Phone Per Week From March to June, Namely about Marked Up Prices**

**Since COVID Beginning: AR AG Leslie Rutledge Received 2,000 to 3,000 Telephoned Complaints Per Week.** “She said since the governor issued the pandemic emergency, her office has received 2,000-3,000 calls a week, up from the 200-300 calls a week before the pandemic. The chief complaint, the sudden increase in the price of personal protective equipment (PPE). [...] So far, fines have not been handed out since the attorney general’s office is still investigating the claims.” [KAIT, [6/11/20](#)]

## **Michigan: 3,500+ Complaints As Of April 16, 2020**

**Michigan Had More Than 3,500 Price Gouging Complaints from March to Mid-April, Compared to Just 80 the Entire Year Before.** “In 2019, Michigan had 80 complaints with more than half of those against gas stations or propane suppliers. Since the first week of March, price gouging complaints have skyrocketed to more than 3,500. It has gotten so bad that Governor Gretchen Whitmer issued an executive order last month just on price gouging. ‘It’s now a crime in the state of Michigan,’ Nessel said. ‘You can be criminally prosecuted for it.’” [ABC 57, [4/16/20](#)]

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## **North Carolina: 2,000+ Complaints As Of May 27, 2020**

**Over 2,000 Price-Gouging Complaints In North Carolina.** “North Carolina’s price gouging law went into effect on March 10, 2020, when Gov. Cooper declared a state of emergency in North Carolina in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Attorney General Stein and the North Carolina Department of Justice will be reviewing price gouging complaints from consumers closely and are prepared to take action against any businesses engaging in price gouging activities. To date, consumers have filed 2,001 complaints with the office.” [NC AG Press Release, [5/27/20](#)]

## **Washington State: 1,100+ Complaints As Of May 28, 2020**

**More than 1,100 Price Gouging Complaints In Washington State.** “Washington State Attorney General Bob Ferguson said his office has received 1,177 complaints relating to price gouging during the coronavirus pandemic. In a [tweet](#), Ferguson said the AG’s office made 65 calls to businesses, conducted 391 business visits, sent eight warning letters, and sent 14 cease and desist letters in relation to price gouging.” [King 5, [5/28/20](#)]

## **Ohio: 1,100+ Price Gouging Complaints As Of June 10, 2020**

**Over 1,100 Complaints about Price Gouging.** “The [FOX 8 I-TEAM](#) has found the state has taken action against just one person for price gouging during the [COVID-19 outbreak](#), even as consumers like you are still piling up complaints with the Ohio Attorney General. The Attorney General’s Office said as of this week, it had received 1,151 complaints about price gouging. And, the office has taken “public action” against one man.” [FOX8, [6/10/20](#)]

## **Utah: Nearly 1,000 Price-Gouging Complaints as of June 15, 2020**

**Nearly 1,000 Complaints about Price-Gouging.** “The state has received 912 complaints about price gouging so far, said Daniel O’Bannon, director of the Utah Division of Consumer Protection. Regulators have worked through about half of them and have mostly tried to educate sellers about the law, he said, noting it contains civil but no criminal penalties.” [Deseret News, [6/15/20](#)]

- **UT: 265% Markup on Masks, Bleach, Foot Items, 250% Markup on Flour, 400% Markup on Hand Sanitizer.** “A company that sold construction-related products before the coronavirus pandemic started offering masks, bleach and food items for as much as 265% over cost. A food service business marked up a \$9.22 bag of flour 250%. Hand sanitizer went for nearly 400% over cost.” [Deseret News, [6/15/20](#)]

## **Illinois: 900+ Complaints As Of April 1, 2020**

**April 1, 2020: More Than 900 Price-Gouging Complaints In Illinois.** “The Illinois Attorney General’s Office is investigating more than 900 price-gouging complaints from people across the state who accused businesses of hiking their prices during the coronavirus pandemic.” [CBS Chicago, [4/01/20](#)]

## **West Virginia: 850+ Complaints About Issues Including Price-Gouging As Of May 1, 2020**

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**May 1, 2020: More Than 850 Complaints About Consumer Issues, Including Price-Gouging.** “West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrissey’s Office issued a release this week stating that it has received more than 850 inquiries on specific consumer issues related to COVID-19 since mid-March.” [12 WOXY, [5/01/20](#)]

### **Iowa: 740+ Complaints As Of June 22, 2020**

**April 27, 2020: 740+ Price-Gouging Complaints In Iowa.** “More than 740 people have complained to Iowa's attorney general of being overcharged for necessities, ripped off, left without refunds or financially stressed by businesses that have been unresponsive during the state's COVID-19 shutdown. From canceled vacations, festivals and concerts, to being charged higher prices for personal protective gear like N95 face masks, to discovering large markups on grocery staples like milk, eggs, meat and toilet paper, people across the state have lodged a mix of pandemic-related concerns from mid-March to June, most of them related to suspected price gouging. [...] Complaints to the attorney general's Consumer Protection Division, both formal and informal, related to suspected pandemic price gouging surpassed 600 last week, Hicks said. Among those being investigated are reviewing: 65 complaints from customers about higher prices they say they were charged at Hy-Vee stores around the state; 29 from Fareway shoppers; and 24 from those shopping at Walmart or Sam's Club.” [Des Moines Register, 6/22/20]

### **Connecticut: 558 Complaints As Of April 21, 2020**

**April 21, 2020: 558 Price-Gouging Complaints In Connecticut.** “To date, the Office of the Attorney General has received 558 complaints concerning 313 retailers in the state. Letters of inquiry have gone out to 255 of these businesses, including online and brick and mortar stores.” [Across Connecticut Patch, [04/21/20](#)]

### **Virginia: 500+ Price-Gouging Complaints As Of May 26, 2020**

**Over 500 Price-Gouging Complaints and Warning Letters Sent to More than 110 Businesses.** “Attorney General Mark Herring has received more than 500 complaints of price gouging across Virginia, including the Richmond region. His office said they continue to get more complaints as the coronavirus pandemic continues. [...] [Charlotte Gomer, a spokeswoman for Herring] said the reports are on items online and in stores, like cleaning supplies, toilet paper, paper towels, hand sanitizer, bottled water, grocery items, and more. Herring said online stores, small mom and pop shops and large retailers are all being investigated. [...] The attorney general said he's [sent out warning letters](#) to more than 110 businesses requiring them to send documentation of their prices before and during the pandemic and to tell him how many of the items were sold. [...] Those who ignore the warning could be fined up to \$2,500 per violation but Herring said he hasn't had to take that action yet.” [ABC8 News, [5/26/20](#)]

### **Colorado: 400 Complaints As Of April 30, 2020.**

**About 400 Price Gouging Complaints Made During Pandemic.** “The Colorado Attorney General's Office is investigating about 400 price gouging complaints during the pandemic.” [KRDO, [5/21/20](#)]

### **DC: Over 430 Consumer Complaints As of May 15, 2020**

**Over 630 Consumer Complaints Since March 11 -- Nearly 3X More Than Previous Year -- and 430+ Were COVID-Specific.** “In a brand new report, released Friday afternoon, the D.C. Office of the Attorney General announced a massive spike in the number of consumer complaints. In the two months since Mayor Bowser's Emergency Declaration on March 11, there have been 634 consumer complaints, according to the report. That

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can be compared to the two-month stretch in January and February, when there were just 245 complaints. [...] The vast majority of the complaints, 438, have been COVID-19 related, according to the report. The biggest categories of complaints have been either 'Billing and Cancellation' issues or 'Price Gouging.'" [WUSA, [5/15/20](#)]

## **Maryland: 200+ Complaints As Of April 30, 2020**

**April 30, 2020: More Than 200 Price-Gouging Complaints In Maryland.** "In March, Governor Hogan issued an Executive Order banning the practice of price gouging. Anything over 10% could hand the retailer a \$10,000 fine. Since then Frosh has received more than 200 complaints and sent out more than 100 warning letters for unlawful increases on essential items. [...] The biggest offenders? Online retailers." [Fox 45, [04/30/20](#)]

## **Indiana: 200+ Complaints As Of April, 2020**

**200+ Price-Gouging Complaints in Indiana from March to Mid-April.** "In 2019, Indiana received about 29 complaints of price gouging. Since the beginning of March, that number has jumped to a total of 233." [ABC 57, [4/16/20](#)]

## **Maine: 83 Complaints As Of April 2, 2020**

**April 2, 2020: 83 Price-Gouging Complaints In Maine.** "The Maine Attorney General's Office says it is receiving a steady stream of complaints related to the coronavirus. The office's Consumer Protection Division has received 194 coronavirus-related complaints since the outbreak reached Maine, including 83 about price gouging, according to the state. The office said it could not provide data showing how many price-gouging complaints it gets in a typical week, so it is impossible to say whether it's on the rise. The division received a total of 74 complaints last week alone, including 25 reports of suspected price gouging, said spokesman Marc Malon." [Portland Press Herald, [04/02/20](#)]

## **State Attorneys General Have Had To Go Around The Trump Administration To Fight Price-Gouging—Directly Asking Congress, Medical Equipment Manufacturers, And Online Sellers To Do More To Fight Inflated Prices**

**April 22, 2020: 13 State Attorneys General Asked Congress "To Temporarily Fix The Prices Of Medical Supplies And Equipment During The COVID-19 Pandemic."** "Today's ruling is the latest action in Attorney General Donovan's ongoing effort to stop price gouging. Last week, he joined a coalition of attorneys general from across the country in sending a letter to Congress asking lawmakers to temporarily fix the prices of medical supplies and equipment during the COVID-19 pandemic." [Vermont Attorney General, [04/27/20](#)]

- **13 Attorneys General Signed The April 22, 2020 Letter.** [[Vermont Attorney General](#), 04/22/20]

**April 20, 2020 19 State Attorneys General Directly Asked 3M To "Do More To Combat Inflated Prices" Of Respirators And Other Medical Equipment.** "Attorney General Donovan, along with 19 attorneys general, also sent a [letter urging 3M](#) to do more to combat inflated prices of N95 respirators and other desperately needed personal protective equipment." [Vermont Attorney General, [04/27/20](#)]

- **19 Attorneys General Signed The April 20, 2020.** [Vermont Attorney General, [04/20/20](#)]

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**March 25, 2020: 32 Attorneys General Directly Asked Online Sellers “Putting Them On Notice” About Price-Gouging.** “In March, [Vermont Attorney General T.J. Donovan] led a coalition of 32 states that sent a [letter](#) to online platforms and retailers putting them on notice that online price gouging will not be tolerated and demanding action to stop third-party vendors from taking advantage of consumers.” [Vermont Attorney General, [04/27/20](#)]

- **32 Attorneys General Signed The March 25, 2020 Letter.** [Vermont Attorney General, [03/25/2020](#)]

**While The Administration Was Slow To Act, Governors Across The Country Had To Take Matters Into Their Own Hands To Fight Price-Gouging...**

**March 2020: Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer Issued An Executive Order That Prohibited Individuals From Reselling A Product At A Price “Is Grossly In Excess Of The Purchase Price” Or At A Price “20% Higher Than What The Person Offered” As Of Early March**

**March 15, 2020: Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer Issued An Executive Order That Temporarily Put “Enhanced Restrictions On The Excessive Pricing Of Goods, Materials, Emergency Supplies, And Consumer Food Items.”** “The Emergency Management Act vests the governor with broad powers and duties to ‘cop[e] with dangers to this state or the people of this state presented by a disaster or emergency,’ which the governor may implement through “executive orders, proclamations, and directives having the force and effect of law.’ [...] To prevent such price gouging and help all Michiganders access necessary products during the COVID-19 emergency, it is reasonable and necessary to temporarily impose enhanced restrictions on the excessive pricing of goods, materials, emergency supplies, and consumer food items.” [[Executive Order No. 2020-8](#),” 03/15/20]

**The Order Prohibited Individuals From Reselling A Product In Michigan “At A Price That Is Grossly In Excess Of The Purchase Price At Which The Person Acquired The Product.”** “Beginning March 16, 2020 at 9:00 am and continuing until April 13, 2020 at 11:59 pm, if a person has acquired any product from a retailer, the person must not resell that product in this state at a price that is grossly in excess of the purchase price at which the person acquired the product.” [[Executive Order No. 2020-8](#),” 03/15/20]

**The Order Prohibited Individuals From Selling A Product “At A Price That Is More Than 20% Higher Than What The Person Offered Or Charged For That Product As Of March 9, 2020.”** “Beginning March 16, 2020 at 9:00 am and continuing until April 13, 2020 at 11:59 pm, a person must not offer for sale or sell any product in this state at a price that is more than 20% higher than what the person offered or charged for that product as of March 9, 2020, unless the person demonstrates that the price increase is attributable to an increase in the cost of bringing the product to market.” [[Executive Order No. 2020-8](#),” 03/15/20]

**March 2020: Arizona Governor Doug Ducey Issued An Executive Order “Prohibiting Price-Gouging On COVID-19 Of Diagnosis And Treatment-Related Services”**

**March 11, 2020: Arizona Governor Doug Ducey Issued An Executive Order That “Implement[ed] Consumer Protections, Including Prohibiting Price-Gouging On COVID-19 Of Diagnosis And Treatment-Related Services.”** “The Governor’s Executive Order is aimed at protecting Arizonans and

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populations at high-risk of serious complications from this virus. The order: [...] Implements consumer protections, including prohibiting price-gouging on COVID-19 of diagnosis and treatment-related services.” [[Press Release](#), 03/11/20]

## **March 2020: Maryland Governor Larry Hogan Signed Legislation That “Prohibits Retailers From Unfair Price Gouging For Essential Goods Like Food, Fuel, Medicine, Medical Supplies, And Cleaning Products”**

**March 19, 2020: Maryland Governor Larry Hogan Signed COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Protection Act Of 2020 Which, Among Other Things, “Prohibits Retailers From Unfair Price Gouging For Essential Goods Like Food, Fuel, Medicine, Medical Supplies, And Cleaning Products.”** “Governor Larry Hogan today signed HB1663/SB1080, the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Protection Act of 2020, which supports the governor’s ongoing actions to combat COVID-19 and protects Marylanders from certain economic hardships that may result from this pandemic. [...] It also prohibits retailers from unfair price gouging for essential goods like food, fuel, medicine, medical supplies, and cleaning products, and affirms that such action is subject to the enforcement by the attorney general.” [[Press Release](#), 03/19/20]

## **March 2020: California Governor Gavin Newsom Extended Emergency Price Gouging Protections Through September 4, 2020**

**March 14, 2020: California Governor Gavin Newsom Declared A State Of Emergency Which, Among Other Things, Enacted Price Gouging Protections Through September 4, 2020.** “The time limitation set forth in Penal Code section 396, subdivision (b), prohibiting price gouging in time of emergency is hereby waived as it related to emergency supplies and medical supplies. These price gouging protections shall be in effect through September 4, 2020.” [[Proclamation Of A State Of Emergency](#),” 03/04/20]

## **May 2020: Georgia Governor Brian Kemp Extended the Public Health State of Emergency that Activated Price Gouging Statutes**

**Georgia’s Price Gouging Statutes Were Activated with the First Enacted and Subsequently Renewed State of Emergency.** “On May 28, 2020, Governor Brian Kemp renewed the Public Health State of Emergency, which will now continue through 11:59 p.m. on July 12, 2020. The State of Emergency was originally issued by the Governor on March 14, 2020 to assist with the state’s response to Covid-19 and was subsequently renewed on April 8 and April 30. When the Governor declared the Public Health State of Emergency, Georgia’s Price Gouging Statutes were activated. This means that while the State of Emergency remains in effect, businesses may not charge more for products and services identified by the Governor than they charged before the declaration of the state of emergency [...]” [All on Georgia, [6/12/20](#)]

## **June 2020: New York Governor Andrew Cuomo Signed Legislation Banning PPE Price Gouging**

**June 6: Cuomo Signed Legislation to Ban Price Gouging Especially of Masks and Hand Sanitizer.** “Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today signed legislation (S.8189/A.10270) banning price gouging of personal protective equipment. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been countless instances of egregious price gouging, particularly of critical medical supplies - such as masks and hand sanitizer - that are desperately needed by our hospitals and other health care facilities. This legislation will help ensure access to these critical supplies for health care workers and the general public.” [Andrew Cuomo Press Release, [6/06/20](#)]

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## **... And State Attorneys General Have Filed A Number Of Lawsuits Against Individuals And Companies Accused Of Price Gouging.**

### **New York Attorney General Sued Wholesaler and Its CEO for Price-Gouging Lysol Disinfectant**

**New York AG Letitia James Accused Quality King of Inflating Prices for Lysol By as Much as Three Times Its Original Price.** “New York state is suing a Bellport wholesaler and its CEO, accusing them of price-gouging consumers on disinfectants used liberally during the pandemic, state Attorney General Letitia James announced Wednesday. [...] The lawsuit claims that Quality King and CEO Glenn Nussdorf illegally increased the wholesale prices on Lysol disinfectant products to neighborhood grocery and discount stores between January and April. It claims the price of a 19-ounce spray can went from about \$4.25 before the COVID-19 pandemic hit to as much as \$9.15 per can — even though, James said in a statement, the company didn't incur any increased costs for the product. As a result, James said, consumers were charged as much as \$16.99 for a can of Lysol disinfectant that previously sold for between \$5 and \$8.” [NewsDay, [5/27/20](#)]

### **Tennessee Attorney General Recouped Over 17,000 Bottles of Hand Sanitizer after Cease-and-Desist Letter to Two Brothers Who Attempted to Resell Online**

**Two Brothers Attempted to Resell Hand Sanitizer on Amazon for Significantly Higher Prices before the State Attorney General Stepped In.** “Two Tennessee brothers who stockpiled 17,700 bottles of hand sanitizer have avoided prosecution and a fine, but won't recoup the thousands of dollars they spent on the supplies under the terms of a price-gouging settlement that the state attorney general announced this week. The brothers, Matt Colvin and Noah Colvin, donated the supplies last month to people in Tennessee and Kentucky, which the authorities said on Tuesday was acceptable as restitution and was a factor in the settlement terms in the highly publicized case. [...] In Tennessee, a state price-gouging law prohibits individuals or businesses from charging “unreasonable” prices for essential goods or services in direct response to a disaster, whether it occurs in the state or elsewhere. Under the settlement terms, the brothers agreed not to engage in any further price gouging during the coronavirus health crisis.” [New York Times, [6/22/20](#)]

### **Michigan Attorney General Pursued Several Actions against Price Gouging Entities Including Those Online**

**Michigan Has Prosecuted and Pursued Fines for Predatory Price Gouging Practices, Particularly for Pandemic-Needed Materials.** “As Michigan's fight against a deadly pandemic continues, Attorney General Dana Nessel has stayed the course in protecting consumers from businesses and retailers charging excessively high prices for products. Nessel's office has taken multiple actions to rein in predatory business practices by both brick-and-mortar establishments and online sellers throughout the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. [...] A.M. Cleaning & Supplies in Ann Arbor has been under investigation by the Attorney General's office for price-gouging for several weeks, and the business has failed to provide documents requested by investigators. The Attorney General's office recently filed a motion in Washtenaw County Circuit Court to enforce its civil investigative subpoena, along with a brief in support of that motion. The motion asks the court to order production of the documents, and to impose a \$1,000 civil fine for the non-compliance. [...] BioMed was the subject of a cease and desist letter from the Attorney General's office in early April. The Attorney General was concerned about BioMed's apparently excessive prices on products like gloves and hand sanitizers in comparison to other companies selling the same or similar products. Under the

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AVC, the business agreed to reduce its prices on sanitizers, gloves and face masks. It also is paying the State of Michigan \$2,000, most of which is designated for reimbursements to consumers through a claims process to be administered by the Attorney General. Consumers who believe they have paid too much for sanitizer, gloves and face masks from BioMed should save their receipts and file a complaint. [...] The Attorney General's office sent a cease and desist letter to Smokehouse Distribution, a business located in Commerce Township, which was advertising face masks for sale on a website called BeamerSmoke. [...] The Attorney General's office signed AVCs with several online sellers operating digital storefronts through Amazon." [Michigan Attorney General, [5/26/20](#)]

## **Pennsylvania Attorney General Pursued a Return of Funds to Consumers for Overpriced Face Masks**

**June 23, 2020: Pennsylvania Attorney General Recovered Fines from a Pharmacy that Overpriced N95 Face Masks.** "A Lancaster pharmacy has been fined \$1,765 for price gouging by the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office for charging too much for N95 facemasks, Attorney General Josh Shapiro announced Monday. [...] In addition to the fine, the pharmacy must pay \$741.30 in restitution to customers who purchased the masks, according to Shapiro. [...] Regional Discount Pharmacy also agreed to fully comply with all provisions of the Pennsylvania Consumer Protection Law and Price Gouging Act moving forward, Shapiro said." [FOX23, [6/23/20](#)]

**...June 8: Targeted Another Store that was Reselling Facemasks.** "Attorney General Josh Shapiro today announced that his office has shut down price gouging efforts at Nature's Garden, LTD. in Reading, Pennsylvania. [...] The Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General entered into an Assurance of Voluntary Compliance (AVC) with Nature's Garden after the Office received tips alleging that the store was selling facemasks for unlawful prices. The Office learned that Nature's Garden sold 28 two-packs of facemasks for \$23.95 per pair. Under the Price Gouging Act, a price increase of more than 20 percent during a declared state of emergency is considered price gouging. The AVC requires Nature's Garden to pay \$1,400 in civil penalties, in addition to restitution of \$224.00 for consumers who purchased the facemasks. Nature's Garden also agreed to fully comply with all provisions of the Pennsylvania Consumer Protection Law and Price Gouging Act moving forward. Consumers who purchased facemasks from Nature's Garden may be eligible for restitution if they paid more than they should have." [Attorney General Josh Shapiro Press Release, [6/08/20](#)]

## **Vermont Attorney General Filed A Lawsuit Against A Vermont Business For Selling Imported Surgical Masks To A Local Medical Center At A "500 Percent Mark-Up"**

**April 14, 2020: Vermont Attorney General T.J. Donovan Filed A Lawsuit Against Big Brother Security Programs For Selling Imported Surgical Masks To The Central Vermont Medical Center For "At Least A 500 Percent Mark-Up."** "Attorney General T.J. Donovan announced that he filed a lawsuit and motion for preliminary injunction to stop a price-gouging scheme involving surgical masks. The State of Vermont alleges Big Brother Security Programs, whose primary business is to own and operate public and private transportation, and its owner Shelley Palmer of Williston, Vermont, imported surgical masks that cost 10 cents each and re-sold them to Central Vermont Medical Center for \$2.50 each; for at least a 500 percent mark-up." [Press Release, [04/26/20](#)]

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## **Iowa Attorney General Filed A Lawsuit Against An Iowa Man Accused Of “Charging Excessive Prices On More Than 250 Items On eBay, Including Toilet Paper, Paper Towels And Disinfecting And Sanitizing Products”**

**April 26, 2020: Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller Filed A Lawsuit Against Michael Noteboom For “Charging Excessive Prices On More Than 250 Items On eBay, Including Toilet Paper, Paper Towels And Disinfecting And Sanitizing Products.”** “Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller has sued an Orange City man for alleged price gouging, accusing him of charging excessive prices on more than 250 items on eBay, including toilet paper, paper towels and disinfecting and sanitizing products. The lawsuit is the first Iowa price-gouging petition filed during the COVID-19 pandemic. [...] The lawsuit names Michael Evan Noteboom of Orange City, who the lawsuit says has the eBay account known as mn65. The lawsuit, filed Friday, asks a judge to order a temporary and permanent injunction to stop Noteboom from selling household merchandise on any platform. It also seeks consumer restitution or disgorgement and civil penalties.” [[Press Release](#), 04/26/20]

## **Texas Attorney General Filed A Lawsuit Against An Egg Supplier For “Raising The Price Of Eggs By Around 300 Percent Without Any Supply Issues Or Significant Disruptions”**

**April 23, 2020: Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton Filed A Lawsuit Against Cal-Maine Foods, Inc. For “Raising The Price Of Eggs By Around 300 Percent Without Any Supply Issues Or Significant Disruptions.”** “Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton today filed a lawsuit against Cal-Maine Foods, Inc., the dominant egg supplier in Texas, for taking unfair advantage of the Governor’s COVID-19 disaster declaration and raising the price of eggs by around 300 percent without any supply issues or significant disruptions. Price gouging laws apply to any person or entity selling necessities, such as food, at an exorbitant or excessive price after a disaster has been declared by the Governor or the President.” [[Press Release](#), 04/23/20]

## **Ohio Attorney General Filed A Lawsuit Against A Man Who Hoarded “More Than 1,200 N95 Masks” To Then Sale Online “For Nearly 18 Times The Retail Price”**

**April 14, 2020: Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost Filed A Lawsuit Against Mario F. Salwan For “Hoarding N95 Respirator Masks And Selling Them Online For Nearly 18 Times The Retail Price.”** “As the state faces a critical shortage of personal protective equipment, Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost today filed a lawsuit against an individual from northeast Ohio and his co-conspirators for hoarding N95 respirator masks and selling them online for nearly 18 times the retail price. Mario F. Salwan, of Chagrin Falls, and others operated an online store on eBay under the now-defunct user name ‘Donkey476.’ Seeing an opportunity to profit from the COVID-19 driven increase in demand for essential products such as N95 masks, hand sanitizer and toilet paper, the group began to accelerate – both in speed and volume – its acquisition of such products.” [[Press Release](#), 04/14/20]

- **After Acquiring More Than 1,200 N95 Masks, Salwan Began Selling N95 Masks For An Average Price Of \$36.34 Per Mask Despite The Average Retail Price Being Just \$2.05 Per Mask Prior To The Coronavirus Pandemic.** “The group ramped up operations during March and acquired more than 1,200 N95 masks. Its bulk purchases set the stage for them to reap exorbitant profits from the ongoing public health crisis, and added to the growing shortage of N95 masks available in the marketplace for purchase by both Ohioans with health concerns and health-care workers. Beginning on March 28, Donkey476 sold packages of 10 N95 masks to 15 purchasers at prices ranging from \$360 to \$375 – with the prices

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averaging \$363.43, or \$36.34 per mask. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the average retail price was \$2.05 per mask.” [[Press Release](#), 04/14/20]

## **Alaska Attorney General Filed A Complaint Against An Individual Who Purchased Thousands Of N95 Respirator Masks From Alaska Stores And Then Resold Them Online For “Unconscionably High Prices”**

**April 1, 2020: Alaska Attorney General Kevin Clarkson Filed A Complaint Against Juan Lyle Aune For “Purchasing Thousands Of N95 Respirators From Alaska Stores, And Then Reselling The Respirators On Amazon And Ebay For Unconscionably High Prices.”** “Attorney General Kevin G. Clarkson today filed a complaint against Juan Lyle Aune. The Complaint alleges that Aune profited from the spread of COVID-19 by purchasing thousands of N95 respirators from Alaska stores, and then reselling the respirators on Amazon and eBay for unconscionably high prices. The complaint asks the court to impose a separate \$25,000 fine for every such sale Aune made. ‘Price gouging is simply unacceptable,’ said Attorney General Kevin G. Clarkson. ‘The Department of Law is fully committed to taking action against those who would engage in unscrupulous behavior to profit off of COVID-19.’” [[Press Release](#), 04/01/20]

## **And Private Companies Have Pursued Legal Action Independent of DOJ While Others Have Called for National Standards**

**3M Has Aggressively Pursued Others Claiming to Be Selling Their Products at Significantly Higher Prices.** “3M Co. settled with two more companies who it says unfairly took advantage of the Covid-19 outbreak by infringing its trademarks and gouging the prices of its N95 masks, according to federal court filings in Wisconsin and Florida. The Friday filings continue the trend of speedy resolutions of cases between 3M and those named in its nationwide litigation campaign. 3M has sued over a dozen entities around the country that it says are falsely claiming to be authorized 3M distributors and taking advantage of the Covid-19 crisis to sell N95 masks at marked-up prices. Courts have tended to award 3M quick restraining orders and injunctions barring defendants from continuing to use its trademarks, and many of the cases have settled just as quickly.” [[Bloomberg Law](#), [6/22/20](#)]

**May 2020: Amazon Called on Congress to Pass National Standards for Price Gouging Laws.** “Our collaborative efforts to hold price gougers accountable have clarified one thing: to keep pace with bad actors and protect consumers, we need a strong federal anti-price gouging law. As of now, price gouging is prohibited during times of crisis in about [two-thirds of the United States](#). The disparate standards among states present a significant challenge for retailers working to assist law enforcement, protect consumers, and comply with the law. [...] While each state is unique and has the ability to enact individual legislative price gouging triggers and remedies, a federal price gouging law would ensure that there are no gaps in protection for consumers.” [[Amazon](#), [5/13/20](#)]

## **Even Congress Has Gotten into the Fray**

## **Members of the House and Senate Have Introduced Legislation and Sought Answers from Administration Officials on the Progress of Price-Gouging Investigations**

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**Senator Dick Durbin Wrote to Task Force Head for Updates on Their Actions.** “In a letter to DOJ’s Hoarding and Price Gouging Task Force (Task Force) leader Craig Carpenito, Durbin requested more information on how the DOJ Task Force is working to investigate and prevent price-gouging involving personal protective equipment, medical supplies, sanitizer and cleaning products, household necessities, and more. Durbin also asked for information about the Task Force’s coordination with other federal, state, and local agencies, and about efforts to address profiteers who take advantage of the lack of transparency on online third-party marketplaces to avoid scrutiny and accountability.” [Senator Dick Durbin Press Release, [6/05/20](#)]

**House Democrats Introduced Two Bills to Address Price-Gouging by Pharmaceutical Companies: the Make Medications Affordable by Preventing Pandemic Pricegouging Act (MMAPPP) Act of 2020 and Taxpayer Research and Coronavirus Knowledge (TRACK) Act.** A bipartisan group of House members “introduced two pieces of bipartisan legislation to protect patients from being price-gouged on COVID-19 treatments and vaccines developed with taxpayer dollars and to strengthen oversight of federal funds invested in COVID-19 research and development.” [Rep. Jan Schakowsky Press Release, [6/22/20](#)]

**....And Ted Lieu and Joe Neguse Introduced the “COVID-19 Price Gouging Prevention Act.”** “A new bill called the COVID-19 Price Gouging Prevention Act proposed by Reps. Joe Neguse and Ted Lieu aims to crack down on price gouging of consumer goods or services. The congressmen formally introduced their legislation on April 3, 2020. According to a [section-by-section summary of the COVID-19 Price Gouging Prevention Act](#), a “consumer good or service” means “a good or service sold primarily for personal or household purposes and includes, but is not limited to, food, beverages, water, ice, chemicals, personal hygiene products, personal protective equipment, respirators, medical supplies, cleaning supplies, sanitizers, healthcare services, delivery services, or cleaning services.” [Drugwatch.com, [5/12/20](#)]

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