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Remarks as Prepared: DCWP Commissioner Levine Delivers Remarks Announcing Adoption of “Click to Cancel” Rule and Proposed “Junk Fees” Rule

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Good morning! Thank you all for coming, and thank you Deputy Mayor Su for the warm introduction.

Let me also thank our Mayor. There is no bolder leader in the fight for a government that puts working people first—and, I should add, no one else who could convince me to eat a Crunchwrap Supreme on camera, or come to the gym on a hot day in a suit.

I also want to extend my deepest gratitude to my friend, mentor, and former boss, Lina Khan.

In her time at the FTC, Chair Khan proved something indispensable to our administration: that committed public servants can successfully challenge concentrated power and deliver results that working people *can actually feel*. Lina, in short, made people believe in the power of government again.

Now speaking of believing, I want to share a short story. Twenty-eight years ago, a future DCWP Commissioner desperately wanted to get his hands on Cher’s new album, *Believe*. Unfortunately, he had not been Bar Mitzahed yet, and he didn’t have the \$15 to buy the CD. But then salvation arrived in the mail: an offer of ten free CDs, shipped to his door. All he had to do was sign one little form.

I didn’t know it then, but I had just signed up for my first subscription. A couple months, a stack of CDs, and a pile of bills later, I experienced something else new: my first subscription trap. It would take a rueful confession and intervention by my parents to cancel that subscription.

I share this embarrassing tale of my 90s childhood to make the point that subscription traps are nothing new. But today, amidst an affordability crisis, the largest companies in the world have weaponized the same tricks, building whole business models around ripping people off.

Tell me if any of this sounds familiar.



You check your receipt and find charges you can't explain. You make it all the way to the end of checkout, only to be bombarded with extra mandatory fees. You sign up for a gym membership, a streaming service, a magazine subscription—and cancelling it somehow becomes harder than signing up. Or you make what you think is a one-time purchase, only to discover you've unwittingly enrolled in a recurring subscription.

Many of us, I think, began to feel this was inevitable. That feeling like we're navigating a minefield when we're shopping is simply the price of modern convenience.

Here in New York, we are rejecting that as a false choice. We're insisting on an economy that treats people with fairness and dignity. And it's with that commitment that we are announcing two landmark consumer protection rules that will save New Yorkers hundreds of millions of dollars, restore fairness to the marketplace, and put an end to practices that have flourished across the country because Washington failed to act.

First, New York City is banning subscription traps—for good. Delivering on Mayor Mamdani's Executive Order 10, DCWP is implementing the first municipal Click-to-Cancel rule in America, guaranteeing that New Yorkers can cancel services and subscriptions as easily as they signed up for them.

If a business can get you to enroll with one click, it should let you leave with one click. It's that simple. No more "free trials" that quietly become monthly charges. No more cancellation pages buried beneath endless menus.

And it's going to make a monumental difference. The Roosevelt Institute estimates that this rule will save New Yorkers up to \$162.5 million and more than 600,000 hours every year. But we're not stopping there.

Today, we're also proposing a groundbreaking new affordability reform that carries out Mayor Mamdani's Executive Order 9, which directs DCWP to crack down on junk fees across the city. We are *not* nibbling around the edges. We're proposing a ban on junk fees in New York City, mandating all-in pricing and requiring businesses to advertise the total price for any good or service upfront. The price you see should be the price you pay.

Over the past six months, we've exposed these spurious charges again and again, from outlawing bogus "destination fees," "resort fees," and "hospitality service fees" secretly tacked onto hotel stays, to holding companies like Extra Space Storage accountable for levying undisclosed "late fees" to bait-and-switch consumers and drive-up costs even higher.

These aren't isolated incidents. They're symptoms of an economy that too often profits from confusion instead of competition, rewarding businesses that trick their customers and punishing



those that play by the rules.

Our proposal would put an end to that. Companies will need to compete on price. Those that break the law can face steep penalties and be forced to pay back their customers.

I urge all interested New Yorkers to provide feedback on our proposal. For decades, corporate lobbyists and high-priced lawyers quietly decided what policies came out of City Hall. In this new era, the working people of New York call the shots.

Let me close with a broader observation. In the first hundred days of this New Era, we moved quickly—using executive orders, inspections, enforcement actions, compliance blitzes, and community outreach—to send the message that this Administration is relentlessly focused on delivering a fairer and more affordable New York. I'm sure many expected that with the hundred days behind us, we would slow down, and return to business as unusual.

Today shows that the opposite is true. The flurry of announcements we made in the first hundreds days only lay the groundwork for what we're announcing today—systemic reforms to drive down costs, lift up honest businesses, and make our economy fairer for all. At DCWP we are proposing, implementing, and enforcing the strongest consumer and worker protections in the country, and we're doing it in record time. And I promise you, we are just getting started.

So thank you again for being here for this historic announcement. Together we can believe in life after subscription traps. We can believe in life after junk fees. We can believe in a City strong enough to deliver a fairer economy for all. Thank you.