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CITY RELEASES GENDER PRICING STUDY – “FROM CRADLE TO CANE: THE COST OF BEING A FEMALE CONSUMER”

Study finds women charged an average of seven percent more than men for personal care items, clothing, toys and senior products

City calls on retailers to reevaluate gender pricing practices

NEW YORK— Mayor de Blasio and Department of Consumer Affairs Commissioner Julie Menin today announced the results of “[From Cradle to Cane: The Cost of Being a Female Consumer](#),” DCA’s first study of gender pricing disparities between goods sold in New York City. Through a comparison of nearly 800 products with clear male and female versions from more than 90 brands sold online and in stores at two dozen New York City stores, the City found that, on average, products for women cost seven percent more than similar products for men. In addition, across the entire sample, women’s products were priced higher 42 percent of the time.

These findings suggest that, over the course of a woman’s life, she pays thousands of dollars more than a man to purchase similar products. Although there may be legitimate drivers behind some portion of the price discrepancies – such as ingredients, textiles and import tariffs – these higher prices are mostly unavoidable to shoppers.

“We must advocate for equality at every turn. Gender equity is a priority of this Administration and across City agencies, which is why we’re placing pressure on retailers to correct their gendered pricing practices and why I established the Commission on Gender Equity earlier this year,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “Gender discrimination is never acceptable, and when we know that women continue to make less than men every year, the findings of this study are insult to injury for female consumers.”

“This study confirms a sad reality that women are confronted with every day – we pay a high price for our gender. And more expensive toiletries are just a fragment of the problem. It’s harder for us to secure good jobs. When we do get a job, we are generally paid less than men. And when, despite the obstacles, we do succeed, we’re judged for ‘acting too much like a man’ or not taking good enough care of our families,” said **First Lady Chirlane McCray, Honorary Chair of the Commission on Gender Equity**. “Yes, we have made progress in recent decades. But the fight for equality is far from over. Today I am more proud than ever to live in New York City, where we realize that seven percent inequality is seven percent too much.”

"Across the City, we are investing in women and fighting for their equal rights," said **Alicia Glen, Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development**. "Whether it's supporting women entrepreneurs with WENYC programs, the exciting work that will come from the Gender Equity Commission, or great work like this study from Consumer Affairs that shows how women don't get the chance to fairly spend their hard earned dollars on basic products, we have to continue our work to stop this ridiculous undercurrent of gender inequality and give women the rightful standing they have earned."

“The most basic consumer right is one and the same with the most basic civil right – you should not be treated differently based on your gender and that includes how much you’re charged,” said **Department of Consumer**

Affairs Commissioner Julie Menin. “In New York City, businesses can set their own prices but it is DCA’s job to make sure that a consumer knows what that price is. That is why we have conducted this study, to educate consumers about the disparities so they can make the most educated shopping choices. We also encourage all New Yorkers to join us in calling on retailers to change their pricing practices.”

“Gender pricing is an issue that impacts every New York household across the five boroughs and it is absolutely unacceptable,” said **Counsel to the Mayor Maya Wiley.** “The newly-formed Commission on Gender Equity is just one example of how this administration is using a gender lens to inform policymaking and strategy. We are committed to making sure New York is one city rising together, and we are working towards building a city where our residents, regardless of gender, live free of discrimination. Public education is an important step in that direction and this report will help New Yorkers make informed choices.”

“This study confirms what we have known to be true: retailers are charging higher prices on products that are targeted to women. In this day and age when women are still making less income on average than their male counterparts, these gender pricing disparities are unfair and unacceptable. I echo DCA’s call for retailers to reevaluate their gender pricing practices and urge women to carefully consider buying those gender –targeted products that are unfairly marketed at a higher price,” said **Council Member Rafael L. Espinal, Jr., Chair of the Consumer Affairs Committee.**

“I thank Commissioner Menin and the team at DCA for leading an important review of gender pricing, an oft-overlooked issue,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams.** “Whether intentional or unconscious, it is clear from analysis that women face discrimination as they shop for goods that are nearly identical to male versions. Women should not have to pay a gender tax, which in effect is the practical result of these pricing disparities. On behalf of 2.6 million Brooklynites, the majority of whom are women, I am proud to lead the call to demand consumer equity for all.”

“When the only substantial difference between products is whether they’re marketed to women or men, it’s hard to see systematically higher prices for women as anything other than discrimination,” said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer.** “Commissioner Menin and the Department of Consumer Affairs are right to call this out, and if manufacturers and retailers can’t find it in themselves to do the right thing, then it is time for those of us in government to find solutions to this problem.”

“Gender discrimination comes in many forms and when women pay more than men for everyday products, it reduces their buying power, making it harder for them to care for their families. This is an important issue and I applaud the Department of Consumer Affairs and Commissioner Menin for highlighting it,” said **Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez.**

“I applaud the DCA and Commissioner Menin for conducting the study to bring light to this issue,” said **State Senator Leroy Comrie, Ranking Member of the Committee on Consumer Protection.** “The conclusion of this report is simple – we still have a long way to go in eliminating gender discrimination. It is unconscionable that women are forced to pay more for basic needs of living while often making less in wages than their male counterparts. Gender pricing disparities also disproportionately impact underprivileged and senior communities. As ranking Ranking Member of the NYS Senate’s Committee on Consumer Protection, I plan to work closely with DCA to educate consumers about these disparities in hopes that we can help level the playing field and change this paradigm.”

“DCA’s inquiry into gender based pricing inequities is important and the result is disturbing,” said **Council Member Robert E. Cornegy, Jr, Chair of the New York City Council Small Business Committee.**

“Women may suffer twice, when the unfair gender pay gap is compounded by pricing differences. But in this instance, knowledge is power. I add my voice to the call for ALL consumers to speak with their dollars, avoiding unfairly priced consumer goods and telling their manufacturers exactly why.”

“There is simply no justification for charging more for women’s products than for men’s products,” said **Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz, Chair of the Committee on Consumer Affairs and Protection.** “This

practice is nothing short of price gouging, and businesses engaging in this unscrupulous and discriminatory behavior should be brought to light. Consumers have a right to know about the disparities in cost for certain products – many of which included in the report are necessities such as everyday hygiene items, toys, and clothing. I applaud Commissioner Menin and DCA for conducting and releasing this report, which I strongly encourage all consumers to read.”

Evaluated products were selected from multiple industries in order to mirror the average consumer lifecycle, from children’s products to products for seniors. In addition to increasing consumer awareness about the issue of gender pricing, the City sent letters to the major retailers of the products reviewed, encouraging them to reevaluate their gender pricing practices.

The goal of the study was to estimate the extent and frequency of the price differences that male and female shoppers face when buying the same types of items from five industries: toys and children’s accessories, children’s clothing, adult clothing, personal care items, and home healthcare products for seniors. DCA compared nearly 800 products across 35 different product categories, such as bikes and scooters, onesies, jeans, razors, and canes. The products selected had similar male and female versions and were the closest in branding, ingredients, appearance, textile, and construction.

The de Blasio Administration has put gender at the center of its fight against inequality. Among the policies and programs put in place by Mayor de Blasio to combat gender inequity are an unprecedented investment in domestic violence response and education through the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence; the formation of a first-ever Commission on Gender Equity to leverage the power of City government to expand and increase opportunity for all New Yorkers regardless of sex, gender, or sexual orientation; the creation of first-ever maternal mental health services through ThriveNYC, a mental health initiative led by First Lady Chirlane McCray; the historic roll-out of Universal Pre-K; the expansion of paid sick leave to many of the lowest paid industries that employ disproportionate amounts of women; the establishment of a partnership with UN women and becoming the first American city to join the United Nation’s Safe Cities Initiative; the appointment and promotion of more women to leadership positions in agencies and City Hall than ever before – with women serving in 57 percent of the administration’s senior leadership positions; and a host of initiatives carried out across City agencies.

“DCA’s comprehensive study makes an important contribution to the steady body of evidence showing that retail goods cost more simply because they are marketed to woman,” said **Michael Cone, New York Office Managing Partner of FisherBroyles, LLP, trade law expert and consultant on the report.** “The problem arises from private decisions by manufacturers, retailers, and advertisers, and also from gender-based import tariffs imposed by the U.S. government. The solution lies with informed retail customers who refuse to buy into the discrimination, and this is why the DCA’s study and efforts to educate the public are so important.”

“Gender pricing is an issue that is discussed constantly in the Fashion Business Management Department at FIT,” said **Professor Robin Sackin, Chairperson of the Fashion Institute of Technology’s Fashion Business Management Department, and consultant on the report.** “We urge our students to understand how the garments they design and the fabrics that are used will ultimately be priced by retailers – and often priced differently because of gender. Pricing is one of the major factors that drive the fashion industry and, as consumers have become more savvy and shop through multiple channels, they compare prices and will be more likely to ask why prices are different for men and women when the garments are almost identical. DCA confronts this consumer issue head on.”

Across the five industries analyzed, women were charged seven percent more for toys and children’s accessories, four percent more for children’s clothing, eight percent more for adult clothing, 13 percent more for personal care items, and eight percent more for home healthcare products. In all but five of the 35 product categories analyzed, products for female consumers were priced higher than those for male consumers.

Examples of products marketed to females that cost more than those marketed to males:

Toys and Children's Accessories

This screenshot shows two Radio Flyer scooters. On the left is the 'Radio Flyer My 1st Scooter Sport - Red' priced at \$24.99. It features a red frame, a silver stem, and three wheels. On the right is the 'Radio Flyer Girls My 1st Scooter Sparkle - Pink' priced at \$49.99. It has a pink frame, a white stem, and three wheels. Both products have a five-star rating, a quantity selector set to 1, and an 'add' button. Below the 'add' button are options for shipping and store pickup.

Children's Clothing

This screenshot displays two red short-sleeved polo shirts. The left shirt is labeled 'Short-Sleeved Uniform' with item # 2043173_4887. Its price is \$5.47, with a circled 'Regularly: \$10.95'. The right shirt is labeled 'Uniform Short Sleeve' with item # 2043376_48. Its price is \$7.77, with a circled 'Regularly: \$12.95'. Both items have a five-star rating and a 'Like A Star' icon. Below the product images are color selection options (all set to red) and size selection options (XS (4), S (5-6), M (7-8), L).

Adult Clothing

This screenshot shows two Levi's jeans products. The top product is 'Men's Jeans, \$68', specifically '501® CT JEANS'. The bottom product is 'Women's Jeans, \$88', specifically '501® CT JEANS FOR WOMEN'. Both pages feature a model wearing the jeans, a size selection dropdown menu, and an 'ADD TO BAG' button. Purple arrows point from the product titles to the respective product pages.

Personal Care Items

	<p>Schick Hydro Silk for Women Cartridges</p> <p>4.0 ea</p> <p>\$20.99 \$18.49 \$4.62 / ea</p> <p>Overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water activated moisturizing serum 5 curved sensing blades for closeness Hydrates longer* than any other razor <p>Take a product tour</p> <p>Ship to you FREE shipping on orders of \$35 or more. Details Arrives in 1-3 business days*</p>
	<p>Schick Hydro 5 Cartridge Razor Refills</p> <p>4.0 ea</p> <p>\$19.99 \$14.99 \$3.75 / ea</p> <p>Overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hydrating gel reservoir 5 ultra glide blades With skin guards that smooth skin more <p>Take a product tour</p> <p>Ship one time FREE shipping on orders of \$35 or more. Details</p>

Home Healthcare Products

	<p>ITA-MED Rib Support for Women White</p> <p>1.0 ea</p> <p>\$32.99 \$26.99</p> <p>✓ FSA</p> <p>Overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elastic Rib Support for Women (RSW-224) helps stabilize rib & sternum fractures by limiting expansion through compression Provides support & compression to the muscles & soft tissues of the rib cage weakened by strain, trauma, eversion, inactivity or surgery Limits the expansion for chest to promote healing
	<p>ITA-MED Rib Support for Men White</p> <p>1.0 ea</p> <p>\$29.99 \$22.99</p> <p>✓ FSA</p> <p>Overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elastic Rib Support for Men (RSM-223) helps stabilize rib & sternum fractures by limiting expansion through compression Provides support & compression to the muscles & soft tissues of the rib cage weakened by strain, trauma, eversion, inactivity or surgery Limits the expansion for chest to promote healing

In 1992, DCA issued a report on differing costs of various services by gender, and concluded that women were frequently charged more than men for the same services in many different industries, including laundry and dry cleaning establishments and hair salons. As a result of this report, in 1998, the New York City Council passed a law requiring posted prices to distinguish between prices based on the actual differences that would require more labor. For example, instead of using the terms shirts and blouses, which are inherently gender based, price lists must describe the differences between the garments: shirts with ruffles, shirts with pleats, etc., as items that require additional labor.

In the past two years, DCA has issued approximately 250 violations for gender pricing for services at laundries, dry cleaners, hair and nail salons, and shoe repair stores.

DCA encourages consumers to share their examples of [#genderpricing](#) on DCA's [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), to call on retailers to reevaluate these gender-based pricing practices, and to file a complaint about gender pricing for services.

About the Department of Consumer Affairs

The Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) licenses, inspects, and educates businesses, assists and informs consumers, mediates complaints, and offers free financial counseling and safe banking products. DCA enforces the Consumer Protection Law, the Paid Sick Leave Law and other related business laws throughout New York City and licenses nearly 80,000 businesses in 55 different industries. For more information, call 311 or visit DCA online at nyc.gov/consumers or on its social media sites, [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

About the Mayor’s Commission on Gender Equity

Mayor de Blasio is committed to leveraging every power of city government to expand and increase opportunity for all New Yorkers – regardless of sex, gender, or sexual orientation – and build a city that is safe and free of discrimination. The Commission on Gender Equity will be integral in achieving these goals, supporting City agency initiatives and working to use a gender lens which will include women, transgender and intersex individuals, and men to achieve greater gender fairness in this city.

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