

Monday, April 11, 2005

CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER GRETCHEN DYKSTRA ANNOUNCES INITIATIVE TO PROTECT NEW YORKERS FROM PASSOVER OVERCHARGES

New York City Department of Consumer Affairs Commissioner Gretchen Dykstra, joined by community leaders and elected officials, today announced an initiative to protect New Yorkers observing the Passover holiday from overcharges. Any New Yorker who suspects overcharging on Kosher-for-Passover items should call 311, the City's 24-hour Citizen Service Hotline, or file out a complaint online at www.nyc.gov/consumers. DCA inspectors will be on alert to investigate any complaints received now through May 1. The announcement was made at Supersol Kosher Supermarket in Manhattan.

"Stores should not use the holiday as a time to take advantage of consumers and jack up prices," said Commissioner Dykstra. "Beginning today and throughout Passover, we're urging consumers to report any overcharges on Kosher-for-Passover items by calling 311 or going to our website. In past years most stores have treated observant New Yorkers fairly. However, it's an effective deterrent to conduct soup-to-nuts inspections of any stores reported."

"During the special holiday season of Passover, it is difficult for middle-income families to make ends meet. For the poor and near-poor it is almost impossible. The Department of Consumer's efforts to make this holiday affordable is a great service," said William E. Rapfogel, Executive Director / CEO of the Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty.

"At Passover, observant New Yorkers are restricted in their shopping options. I commend New York businesses who respect this and maintain fair pricing," said Councilmember Gale Brewer. "Anyone who thinks they have been overcharged should call 311 so DCA can conduct a complete inspection."

"It's never acceptable to take advantage of consumers. But it is especially unconscionable to do so during the Holidays. The Bloomberg administration is to be commended for their continued resolve in fighting price gouging," said Councilmember Simcha Felder.