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ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL WARNS ONLINE RETAILERS TO COMPLY WITH PRICE GOUGING LAWS

Raoul, 32 Attorneys General Urge Amazon, Facebook, eBay, Craigslist and Walmart to Monitor Third-Party Seller Listings of Items to Stop COVID-19 Spread

Chicago — Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul, as part of a coalition of 33 attorneys general, today urged Amazon, Facebook, eBay, Walmart and Craigslist to rigorously monitor price gouging practices by online sellers using their services.

In [bipartisan letters](#) issued today, Raoul and the coalition acknowledged the companies' cooperation with states' efforts to stop price gouging and asked that online retailers do more to monitor listings by third-party sellers.

"At a time when my office could be assisting people who are concerned about how the COVID-19 pandemic will impact their mortgage, rent and student loan debt payments, my office is devoting significant resources to investigating individuals who are attempting to benefit from the public health crisis by putting profits before people," Raoul said. "While these online platforms have worked cooperatively with my office to address allegations of price gouging, I encourage them to do more on their own to help us stop this practice, which prevents residents and health care workers from accessing the crucial items needed to stop the spread of the coronavirus."

In the letters, Raoul and the coalition cite several examples of price-gouging on these marketplace platforms, all of which occurred in March. The attorneys general referenced a 2-liter bottle of hand sanitizer listed for \$250 on Craigslist, an 8-ounce bottle of hand sanitizer listed for \$40 on Facebook Marketplace, and packs of face masks being priced at \$40 and \$50 on eBay. Raoul's office contacted eBay after receiving a complaint about a seller listing a package of toilet tissue for sale for \$49,000.

"Americans are already worried about their health and the health of their loved ones during this pandemic. They shouldn't also have to worry about being ripped off on the critical supplies they need to get through it," said Abe Scarr, Illinois PIRG Education Fund Director. "We're grateful for the leadership of Illinois Attorney General Raoul and 32 attorneys general who joined him in calling for more robust protections on these online marketplaces during this crisis."

Raoul and the coalition encouraged the online marketplace platforms to adopt the following practices to protect consumers from price gouging:

- **Prevent exorbitant price increases from occurring in the first place** by setting and enforcing price increase limits based on a 90-day average of the item's price before an emergency begins.
- **Trigger price gouging protections prior to an emergency declaration**, such as when systems detect pending weather events or future possible health risks.
- **Create a complaint portal** for consumers to report potential price gouging.

Raoul encourages people to report unfair pricing and other unfair business practices connected to the COVID-19 outbreak by visiting the [Attorney General's website](#).

Joining Raoul in sending the letters are the attorneys general of California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wyoming and Puerto Rico.