



*Advocating the views of convenience stores, supermarkets,
independent grocers, wholesalers and consumer product vendors.*

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Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association applauds Senate passage of business & consumer-friendly measure updating state Price Gouging Act

CAMP HILL (June 3, 2019) – The Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association (PFMA) applauds the state Senate’s passage today of Senate Bill 139, which would modernize the state’s Price Gouging Act to benefit both businesses and consumers.

The bipartisan legislation, sponsored by state Sen. Judy Ward, would address price controls during a state of emergency declaration. The measure was approved in March by the Senate Veterans’ Affairs & Emergency Preparedness Committee, with only one member voting against it.

“This change to Price Gouging Act is long overdue,” PFMA President & CEO Alex Baloga said. “Sen. Ward’s measure would eliminate unintended consequences from heroin and opioid declarations, address the length of declarations, and clarify the exposure to sellers of consumer goods during a state of emergency.”

Specifically, the measure would:

- Require the Governor to specifically activate pricing restrictions when declaring an emergency so they apply only when needed. Other states have similar best practices.
- Limit the duration of pricing restrictions to 15 days (with extensions up to 60 days), and limit their scope to those goods and services necessary for use or consumption.
- Provide guidance as to what prices would not violate the law -- with safe harbors for prices that are 10% or less above specified benchmarks or consistent with external market prices.
- Simplify the compliance process (important for small businesses).
- Make the penalty provision work more fairly and centralize enforcement in the Commonwealth (within the Attorney General’s Office).

The legislation is supported by many statewide business organizations, including American Car Rental Association, Associated Petroleum Industries of PA, National Federation of Independent Business, Pennsylvania Builders Association, Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry, Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association, Pennsylvania Manufacturers Association, Pennsylvania Restaurant and Lodging Association, and the Pennsylvania Retailers Association.

About PFMA

The Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association, a statewide trade association, advocates the views of nearly 800 convenience stores, supermarkets, independent grocers, wholesalers and consumer product vendors. PFMA members operate more than 3,500 stores and employ more than 200,000 Pennsylvanians. For more information on PFMA, visit www.pfma.org.

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