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No Such Thing as ‘Unfair Pricing’ in America’s Dynamic Economy

By Paul Steidler

President Biden and his administration are on the warpath this week against ["unfair pricing."](#) The only problem: It does not exist.

More specifically, the White House announced today a “strike force” against “unfair and illegal pricing.” The President is widely expected to make unfair pricing part of his State of the Union speech on Thursday, likely repeating examples of baggage and other junk fees that nearly everyone disdains.

If you experience illegal pricing, there is plenty of recourse to take against these criminals. If you are a “victim” of unfair pricing there are lessons to be learned and steps that can subsequently be taken.

There are three fundamental reasons why having “strike forces” against unfair pricing is insidious to America’s dynamic, thriving economy, which has continually produced more goods and services at lower prices than any other country in the history of the world.

Takes the focus off illegal, criminal activity. There are plenty of ways to crack down on illegal pricing, especially outright scams. Consumer advocates can bring about steep fines and jail sentences, even putting some companies out of business. With the President ordering the Federal Trade Commission to put more emphasis on "unfair pricing" there are fewer resources to go after the big-time scammers who prey on America’s most vulnerable citizens, the sick and the elderly.

Assumes the government knows what unfair pricing is. Bashing unfair pricing assumes the government has the expertise to know what prices should be. That is, it infers that Biden administration academics and career politicians with little if any business experience should set prices. Can price setting and Soviet Union style shortages be far behind if we go down that path?

President Biden often complains about increases in grocery prices. So, are grocers supposed to swallow higher fuel prices, higher wage payments, and higher prices for meat, eggs, and poultry without passing them on? Simply put, grocers should be able to decide what to charge. Consumers get to decide whether they will pay the prices, find other stores, eat less, or take any number of creative solutions.

Glorifies pandering and whining and weakens the American spirit. We all get ripped off and ticked off from time to time for what we believe or know are unfair prices. But is it advisable to have a “strike force” from the federal government because the cost of eggs is higher than we thought? And aren’t strike forces for terrorists and others perpetuating actual harm?

The power of America’s economy is choices. If you get gouged by the last gas station before going onto the highway you know to use a different one. Don’t like baggage fees? Pack light or fly Southwest. Or drive or take a bus.

America’s economy was built by risk-takers and innovators who found ways to make things better and cheaper for discerning consumers. It is time for the Biden Administration to back off “unfair pricing” and focus on issues that merit national attention.

Furthermore, the administration should stop attacking our most innovative companies that drive lower prices, such as Amazon, with vast listings for low prices, and Google, with its free search engine.

As a reminder, inflation ran at an average annual rate of [1.2 percent](#) in the 10 years from 2011-20. It has nearly tripled in the Biden administration with the Consumer Price Index rising 7.0, 6.5, and 3.4 percent respectively in 2021, 2022, and 2023.

By taking steps back on interfering with the economy, the Biden administration will enable an environment with lower inflation.