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DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS LAUNCHES CITYWIDE BUSINESS EDUCATION TOUR WITH THE CITY'S CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Julie Menin today launched DCA's five-borough Business Education Tour in Brooklyn. The event series, in partnership with the chambers of commerce in each borough, is to educate business owners and other key leaders about the nearly two-dozen reforms that DCA has implemented to bring relief to thousands of small businesses in New York City. The Small Business Relief Package, which DCA announced in July, has reduced the number and cost of violations, increased transparency and fairness, and is expanding outreach and education to businesses. Commissioner Menin will meet with businesses in all five boroughs at breakfast events hosted by the chambers of commerce over the next three weeks.

"This Administration is committed to helping New York City's small business community thrive," said Commissioner Julie Menin. "Following Mayor de Blasio's lead, we formulated a plan to provide a fair environment for our small business owners. Instead of paying the City for violations that aren't directly harming the consumer, we want them to keep that money to build up their businesses because this is how we can make our City grow."

"Julie Menin has done a fantastic job as Commissioner of the Department of Consumer Affairs in the six months since she was appointed," said Carlo A. Scissura, President and CEO of the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce. "The new reforms that the de Blasio administration has instituted at the department will go a long way towards helping small businesses grow stronger and improving their relationship with the city. I want to thank Commissioner Menin for being here today and for all she does at DCA to help the business community in Brooklyn."

"As Chair of the Consumer Affairs Committee, I look forward to continue working with Commissioner Menin to create a climate where consumers are protected and small businesses can thrive," said Councilmember Rafael L. Espinal, Jr. "I strongly believe

that under her leadership, small businesses will see DCA as a resource, not a burden. It's evident in her willingness to visit every Chamber of Commerce across the city.”

“New York City’s small businesses are central to the lives of our communities, providing goods, services and jobs. Business owners should see city government as a source of help and support, not as a force to defend against. DCA’s commitment to reducing fines sends a positive message and tells business owners that their cries have been heard. I’m happy to welcome Commissioner Menin to Brooklyn for the first stop on her five-borough business education tour and look forward to seeing the impact of this policy change across our city,” said Councilmember Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.

“The small business community makes New York City thrive and it is important that we give them every opportunity for success. Thank you to Commissioner Menin and the Department of Consumer Affairs for their dedication to New York City’s small business community and for hosting this citywide business education tour,” said Councilmember Stephen Levin.

The first event with the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce will be held at the Brooklyn Law School (250 Joralemon Street) on October 14. Additional events will be in Manhattan on Wednesday, October, 15 at Phelps & Philips (7 Times Square); in Queens on Monday, October 27; in Staten Island on Wednesday, October 29; and in the Bronx on Monday, November 3.

DCA’s Small Business Relief Package fulfills Mayor de Blasio’s campaign promise to reduce onerous fines on small businesses. Reforms include curable violations, warnings instead of violations for signage, reduced settlement amounts, and depending on the fines will range between \$250 to \$1,200. In most cases, a DCA inspector will only issue one violation for each piece of information missing from a required sign or a receipt instead of one violation for each missing item. The policy on individual price posting has also changed, which will benefit bodegas, small groceries and general retail stores. DCA has lowered the cost of a fine for businesses that choose to settle the violation instead of going to hearing for numerous industries, including newsstands, nail salons, supermarkets, grocery stores, laundries, hair salons, barbershops, dry cleaners, and electronic service dealers, among others.

The Cure Law, which went into effect June 30, 2014, means businesses can correct many first-time, signage violations within 30 days to avoid paying a fine. Going beyond the Cure Law, DCA will issue warnings instead of violations for additional violations not covered by the law such as not having the DCA license number on all printed materials (except for electronics stores) and not stating the reason for the range of price variations on a price list. DCA posted all 41 inspector checklists on its website so businesses know in advance what inspectors look for when they come into their businesses.

The Small Business Relief Package also includes language access, in which business can have inspections done on the spot in the language of their choice; an internal

mapping tool to know which neighborhoods are being inspected; an inspector available at the licensing center five days a week; and a legal ombudsman to provide businesses legal assistance.

DCA will continue to remain vigilant in protecting consumers. The Agency is currently involved in several aggressive initiatives to crack down on scams, fraud, health and safety abuses and unlicensed activity through investigation and other tactics.

The Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) licenses, inspects, and educates businesses, mediates complaints, educates consumers, 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. Through targeted outreach, partnerships with community and trade organizations, and informational materials, DCA educates consumers and businesses alike about their rights and responsibilities. DCA's Office of Financial Empowerment assists low-income New Yorkers with innovative programs and services to increase access to high-quality, low-cost financial education and counseling, safe and affordable mainstream banking, and access to income-boosting tax credits and savings. For more information, call 311 or visit DCA online at [nyc.gov/consumers](http://www.nyc.gov/consumers) (link to: <http://www.nyc.gov/consumers>) or on its social media sites, [Twitter](http://www.twitter.com/nycdca) (link to: <http://www.twitter.com/nycdca>), [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/nycdca) (link to: <http://www.facebook.com/nycdca>), [Instagram](http://www.instagram.com/nycdca) (link to: <http://www.instagram.com/nycdca>), and [YouTube](http://www.youtube.com/nycdca) (link to: <http://www.youtube.com/nycdca>).