

Ottawa Journal by David Tilson MP ? Price Transparency Act



If you have ever shopped online or in the United States, you may have noticed that it is common for Canadians to pay a higher sticker price than Americans for many identical goods.

Experts estimate that Canadians pay, on average, 10 to 25 per cent more for goods in Canada than in the U.S. This significant and unexplained price difference is a major source of frustration for many Canadians.

We believe that when Canadian families make decisions on where to spend their hard-earned dollars, they deserve to know that they're getting a fair price.

This unexplained difference between Canadian and American prices for the exact same product is called geographic price discrimination.

It involves charging Canadians more than Americans for the exact same product simply because of where we live.

These price differences are real and they hurt the bottom line of hardworking families.

We believe that Canadians work hard for their money and should not be charged higher prices simply because of where they live. Consumers expect and deserve better.

This is why our government tabled the Price Transparency Act, which will give Canada's Commissioner of Competition the power to investigate price discrimination and expose it.

It will help ensure that Canadians pay a comparable price for comparable goods that they buy in Canada.

This legislation will not set or regulate prices in Canada. It will create the tools necessary to investigate and expose cases of unjustified price discrimination that hurt Canadian families.

It is a reality that the prices of some goods in Canada are due to the legitimate costs of doing business on this side of the border.

Those factors do explain some of the price differences, but it is not the full story.

Geographic price discrimination is real and it is a significant burden on the bottom line of Canadians and hardworking Canadian families.

Ultimately, consumers should know whether the differences between Canada and the U.S. prices are justified.

Upon forming the government in 2006, we set out an ambitious agenda to offer strong support to Canadians consumers.

Since that time we have cut taxes, introduced tougher rules to ensure better marketplace fairness, promoted competition in a number of industries, and improved product and food safety.

The Price Transparency Act is another step our government is taking in order to put more money back into the pockets of hard-working Canadian families.