

**Testimony of Commissioner Samuel A.A. Levine
New York City Department of Consumer and Worker Protection
Before the Committee on Consumer and Worker Protection
Hearing on Fiscal Year 2027 Executive Budget**

May 29, 2026

Introduction

Hello, Chair Epstein and members of the Committee on Consumer and Worker Protection. I am Sam Levine, Commissioner of the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP). Today, I am joined by our General Counsel, Michael Tiger, our Chief of Staff, Carlos Ortiz, and our Deputy Commissioner of the Office of Labor Policy & Standards, Elizabeth Wagoner. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today before this committee to testify on the work of our agency and our Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2027.

DCWP is the nation's leading municipal enforcement agency charged with delivering economic justice. DCWP leverages its authority to bring New Yorkers real economic relief and protect them from predatory, deceptive, and unconscionable practices that violate their rights as consumers and workers. This includes pioneering cutting-edge protections, such as the City's Consumer Protection Law, Protected Time Off Law, Fair Workweek Law, and Delivery Worker Laws, including the Minimum Pay Rate for delivery workers. Through licensing more than 45,000 businesses in over 45 industries, DCWP ensures fair competition and a level playing field for responsible small businesses that are integral to New York City's vibrant communities. DCWP also provides essential services such as free tax preparation for individuals and families as well as tax prep services for self-employed workers and small businesses, and one-on-one financial counseling to ensure New Yorkers keep more of what they earn and can plan for their futures.

Though it has been just short of six months under my tenure, it has been a privilege to serve as the Commissioner of DCWP, an agency that champions millions of consumers, workers, and families across the city day after day. Today, I will provide the committee with an overview of the Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2027, the work of our agency, and our path forward in continuing to build a fairer, more affordable city for all New Yorkers under Mayor Mamdani's Administration.

DCWP's Budget

For Fiscal Year 2027, DCWP's Executive Budget is approximately \$78.5 million, with an active headcount of 409, and an authorized headcount of 561, the highest authorized headcount our agency has ever had. This is due, in no small part, to the advocacy of our partners, this council, and of course, the immense support and recognition of our agency's work from Mayor Mamdani.

Mayor Mamdani's Executive Budget represents the single greatest investment in consumer and workers' rights in DCWP's history. All told, DCWP will be receiving a total of 181 lines and \$17.9 million in personnel services by Fiscal Year 2029. The breakdown is as follows: In Fiscal Year 2027, DCWP will receive 77 lines and \$4.3 million in personnel services. In Fiscal Year 2028, DCWP will receive 76 lines and \$7.3 million in Personnel Services, and in Fiscal Year 2029, we will receive 28 lines and the remaining \$6.3 million in Personnel Services. The new lines we will be receiving in FY27 will be strategically

deployed to immediately begin implementation of major new laws, and much needed protections for New Yorkers.

Championing Consumers, Workers and Families Across the City

It has been just shy of six months since the start of my tenure, and I am beyond proud of what this agency has already accomplished under the Mamdani Administration. Our team has been at the forefront of this Administration implementing cutting edge new mandates, aggressively pursuing new protections and securing victory after victory for New Yorkers. These range from our expanded Delivery Worker Laws, including a minimum pay rate for grocery delivery workers, an expanded Protected Time Off Law, and soon to come: deactivation protections for key workforces and more licenses for our city's street vendors. I also want to be sure to emphasize Chair Epstein's much needed legislation to address the student loan debt crisis in our city. Under Local Law 84, we will expand our critical financial empowerment center network by providing student loan debt services, which will be essential for New Yorkers.

In addition to the new laws and requirements, DCWP has also taken more proactive and innovative steps to strengthen protections for those who make this city run. Earlier this year, tasked with tackling deceptive and predatory practices under Mayor Mamdani's executive orders, DCWP adopted the strongest prohibition of hotel junk fees in the country. This rule protects both New Yorkers traveling outside the city and those visiting our city from unexpected and costly fees, with projected savings of up to \$35 million per year for New Yorkers and up to \$31 million for visitors. We also proposed rules to ensure that consumers can easily cancel automatic renewals and continuous service offers. This Click to Cancel rule is estimated to save New Yorkers up to \$162.5 million a year, according to the Roosevelt Institute. Lastly, we finalized the SHIELD rule, a debt collection rule that provides New Yorkers with the nation's strongest protections against debt collector harassment. In addition to expanded protections under our rules, we also released a benchmarking report on a data-driven enforcement strategy for New York City's Protected Time Off Law, leading and guiding the nation in education and compliance on a cornerstone workplace right. This work to further New Yorkers' rights will only continue as we proactively leverage our authority to pursue an ambitious agenda delivering on the Mayor's vision.

DCWP's New Era of Delivering Economic Justice

While we have been working to implement and expand protections afforded to New Yorkers, we have also been fighting harder than ever before to vigorously enforce our laws, cracking down on predatory corporate practices to hold bad actors accountable. We started 2026 off by launching a robust compliance blitz, sending notices to various industries, reminding them of their obligations under the law and the repercussions that arise from noncompliance. This past January, we exposed Uber and Doordash for deceptive design tricks that made it harder for consumers to tip delivery workers, driving down worker pay by more than half a billion dollars. We have shown major corporations that there are consequences for violating our laws—and we are actively seeking millions in penalties and restitution from numerous predatory businesses for exploiting and cheating New Yorkers. These efforts span across our work, delivering real results for consumers, workers, and small businesses alike. We secured \$5 million from three delivery apps for violations of the minimum pay rate, and more than \$500,000 for freelancers ripped off by the production company, Splashlight. In March, we announced a \$1.5 million settlement with Dunkin' and Taco Bell Franchisees for violations of the Fair Workweek Law, securing economic justice for more than 760 workers. We took legal action against predatory businesses like Extra Space, Radiant

Solar, and Instant Recovery Corp, seeking over tens of millions of dollars in penalties for deceptive and illegal schemes to raise costs for consumers. We also went after major employment agencies, CMP, Golden Rose, and Eleny's, and won almost \$1 million in restitution for individuals who faced exploitation and a violation of their rights by these businesses. In April, we announced a settlement of more than \$875,000 with HungryPanda for violating New York City's Fee Cap Law and charging small, immigrant-owned restaurants thousands of dollars in illegal junk fees. And most recently, the Mayor announced our actions against Honda of the Bronx, a used car dealer engaging in widespread deceptive businesses practices.

All this work is a clear reminder that under this administration, there is zero tolerance for companies that violate the law, and that we will fight to bring justice to the New Yorkers that faced violations. The numbers speak for themselves—within Mayor Mamdani's first 100 days, we had already secured nearly \$10 million for New Yorkers, and that number is only growing as we continue delivering real economic justice to consumers, workers and small businesses across the city. This is just the beginning of a transformative era, and we look forward to continuing our relentless fight to bring accountability, affordability, and economic justice to the lives of New Yorkers.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on DCWP's commitment to championing consumers, workers, and families in this new era of economic justice for all New Yorkers. I would again like to express my gratitude to Mayor Mamdani, to Chair Epstein, members of the committee, and all of our partners in this room for their steadfast advocacy on the agency's behalf.

We are eager to continue our success delivering millions in real economic relief to countless New Yorkers and advancing Mayor Mamdani's agenda for a fairer, more affordable New York City. I look forward to answering your questions.