

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 16, 2025

The Honorable David Joyce
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services and
General Government
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services and
General Government
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Joyce and Ranking Member Hoyer:

As you begin to work on the Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) Financial Services and General Government (FSGG) Appropriations bill, we write to request that you include report language to direct the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to conduct a survey of concession prices and affordable pricing practices across major airports and sports stadiums.

In 1985, the average fan at the Major League Baseball (MLB) All-Star Game in Minneapolis spent about \$5 on beer and other concessions (a little less than \$15 in 2025 dollars).¹ Today, this does not even cover the cost of a single beer at Nationals Park.² Inside the stadium, fans across major sports, including at National Basketball League (NBA), National Football League (NFL), and National Hockey League (NHL) games, face exorbitant prices for concessions after paying high ticket fees. While serving very different purposes, airports share many of the same dynamics as sports stadiums. Travelers often arrive at airports hours before departure and face restrictions on bringing in outside food and beverages. With few options, travelers face extreme markups for drinks and food before their flights. Despite the significant public investment into airports and sports venues, through direct grants, state and local tax credits, economic development incentives, and tax-exempt bonds, the cost of concessions at a ballgame or an airport remains unaffordable for the average American family.

According to a recent report by the Groundwork Collaborative, most large U.S. airports implement some policies to seek to curb excessive pricing. Even then, the most common approach, known as “street pricing plus,” allows vendors to charge 10 to 18 percent more than off-airport prices. Set by state and local transit authorities, these policies vary widely across airports and leave high prices to compound the already high costs of air travel. Similarly, several individual sports teams have begun introducing “value deals,” offering a handful of basic items (such as bottled water, pretzels, and hot dogs) at lower prices. Following their move to Mercedes-Benz stadium in 2017, the Atlanta Falcons implemented significant concession price

¹ “St. Paul natives bolster AL try to snap NL string,” *Minnesota Star Tribune*, July 16, 1985, <https://startribune.newspapers.com/newspage/189887582/>.

² Eat DC (@eat_dc), X (Mar. 21, 2025) (online at https://x.com/eat_dc/status/1903115586533515617).

cuts – about 50 percent – aligning their prices with what fans may pay on the street. After this cut, the Falcons saw a 30 percent increase in overall transactions, a 20 percent increase in merchandise sales, and a 20 percent increase in the number of items per transaction. The Falcons’ move and other case studies, including Portland International Airport and Salt Lake City Airport, reveal that these “street pricing” practices can be a win-win for businesses and consumers.³

With housing, food, and other everyday costs already so high, families visiting airports or sports stadiums – venues supported by their tax dollars – should not have to worry about drastic price markups. It's clear that some form of street pricing is effective to make concessions more affordable while remaining sensible for businesses at these venues.

A nationwide survey of concession prices and street pricing practices at these venues would allow the FTC, lawmakers, and most importantly, fans and travelers, to gain more transparency into potential price gouging by venues and determine what sustainable, affordable practices work best. We urge you to include the report language below to direct the FTC conduct such a survey and provide a report to Congress on its findings.

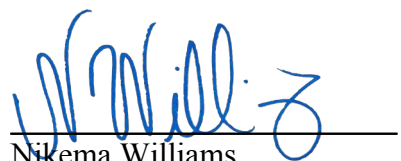
“Airport and Sports Stadium Concessions.--The Committee is concerned about the high cost of concessions at airports and sports stadiums that receive public financing. While the Committee is pleased to see some venues make certain concessions more affordable through street pricing practices (i.e. aligning vendor prices inside the venue with prices that one may pay across the street), travel and sports remain unaffordable for most families. The Committee directs the FTC to conduct a survey of concession prices and street pricing practices across airports and major stadiums. The FTC shall provide a report to the Committee no later than 180 days of enactment of this act on its findings.”

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

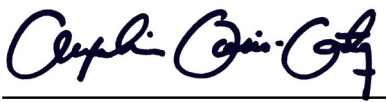


Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress

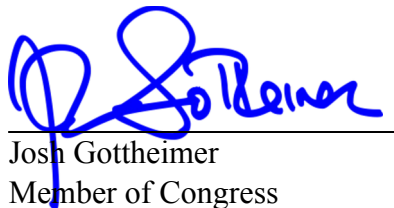
³ DiVito et al., “Shakedown at the Snack Counter: The Case for Street Pricing,” *Groundwork Collaborative*, March 27, 2025, <https://groundworkcollaborative.org/work/street-pricing/>.



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