

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2017 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

Senate Bill 731

(Senator Norman, *et al.*)

Judicial Proceedings

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**Task Force on Organized Retail Crime Rings**

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This bill establishes the Task Force on Organized Retail Crime Rings. The task force must elect a chair from its members, and the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP) must provide staff for the task force. By October 1, 2018, the task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee and the House Judiciary Committee.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2017, and terminates December 31, 2018.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Any expense reimbursement for task force members and staffing costs for GOCCP are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** At a minimum, the task force must:

- examine the effects of organized retail crime rings on businesses in the State;
- determine the factors related to the proliferation of organized retail crime;
- examine the criminal penalties associated with organized retail crime;

- consult and coordinate with pertinent entities to identify effective measures to curtail organized retail crime rings; and
- recommend legislation to combat organized retail crime rings.

The task force must meet at least twice but may determine the time and location of meetings.

A member of the task force may not receive compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations, as provided in the State budget.

**Background:** According to the National Retail Federation (NRF), organized retail crime is the large-scale theft of retail merchandise with the intent to resell the merchandise for financial gain. Typical organized retail crime operations involve criminal networks that employ individuals to steal large amounts of merchandise from retailers and then convert the merchandise to cash by moving it through a fencing operation. NRF estimates that organized retail crime costs retailers approximately \$30 billion each year. Approximately 97% of retailers surveyed by NRF in 2015 reported being victims of organized retail crime within the past 12 months.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** HB 831 (Delegate Dumais, *et al.*) - Judiciary.

**Information Source(s):** Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention; National Retail Federation; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 12, 2017  
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