

JARED SOLOMON  
Legislative District 18  
Montgomery County

DEPUTY SPEAKER PRO TEM

Appropriations Committee

*Subcommittees*

Chair, Oversight Committee  
on Personnel

Capital Budget

House Chair, Joint Audit and  
Evaluation Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 312  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
301-858-3130 · 410-841-3130  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3130  
Fax 301-858-3053 · 410-841-3053  
Jared.Solomon@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**HB 318 Testimony – Criminal Law – Theft – Mail and Mail Depository Key  
The Safe Carrier Act  
January 30, 2024**

**House Judiciary Committee**

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Sandy, Colleagues, thank you for the opportunity to present on my bill HB318 that creates a criminal penalty for mail theft under state law that did not previously exist and outlines penalties for the amount of mail stolen, mail stolen from elderly or vulnerable citizens, mail containing personal identifying information, and assault of mail carriers.

The need for this bill is threefold:

1. It is difficult to determine the value of stolen mail impeding the State's Attorney's office from pursuing prosecution under the Maryland criminal law statute.
2. Currently if the federal government chose to, they could investigate and prosecute a case of mail theft in Maryland. If found guilty, an individual could be fined or imprisoned not more than 5 years, or both. HB 318 would allow a State's Attorney's office to pursue a case of mail theft if the federal government declined to prosecute the case. The bill allows the federal government to target its resources on larger, more complex cases while enabling state prosecutors to pursue smaller, yet still egregious, state cases.
3. Mail theft and the assault of postal carriers is a growing concern throughout Maryland and the current federal statute is not a strong enough deterrent to prevent mail theft. HB 318 strengthens the penalty for mail theft, imposing stiffer penalties based on:
  - If victims are elderly or vulnerable citizens
  - If a victim's identity is stolen
  - If a mail carrier is assaulted

There are an increasing number of incidents where mail is taken directly out of the blue mailboxes or mail carriers are held up at gun point for their “arrow keys” (a tool to access mail receptacles) to gain access to multiple mailboxes in a neighborhood.

### Recent Incidents of Mail Theft in Maryland

- In July 2022, there were 6 incidents of mail theft in less than 24 hours, including Takoma Park, Wheaton, Beltsville, and Columbia, MD as well as Northeast and Southeast DC. <sup>1</sup>
- In August 2022, 4 defendants were charged with theft of mail and the unlawful possession of postal service keys in Bethesda and Silver Spring. <sup>2</sup>
- In 2022, according to federal officials, at least 13 robberies involving USPS letter carriers have happened in the greater Washington D.C. metropolitan area between May 23 and July 7.
- In January 2023, a man in Silver Spring was accused of robbing a U.S. Postal carrier at gun point. <sup>3</sup>
- In April 2023, a postal worker in Chevy Chase threatened with a gun and robbed of USPS property. <sup>4</sup>

### **HB 318**

The bill was written in collaboration with the United State Inspection Service and the Montgomery County State’s Attorney’s office. A sponsor amendment that includes provisions provided by the State’s Attorney’s office that will strengthen and streamline the bill, including:

- Clarifying the definitions of arrow key, mail carrier, mail depository; and Removing the tiered penalty section to make mail theft similar to existing state law, specifically the law related to the Use and Disclosure of a Credit Card Number (CR 8-214) and Counterfeiting (CR 8-601). A piece of mail would now be the unit of prosecution, and mail theft would be a felony. This makes the statute shorter, easier to read, and far easier to use.

The bill strengthens state law on mail theft, assault of mail carriers, mail identity theft, and theft from elderly or vulnerable citizens. Under the bill a person who:

1. Commits mail theft may be charged with a felony and faces imprisonment for up to 10 years
2. Steals an “arrow key” or other device used to open a mail depository may be charged with a felony and faces imprisonment for not less than 5 years and not more than 20 years;

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/police/investigators-mail-carriers-robbed-gunpoint-dc-maryland-24-hours/65-ef9763d9-be6a-418c-8506-2a827d2be91a>

<sup>2</sup> <https://patch.com/maryland/bowie/4-face-charges-mail-theft-possessing-postal-service-keys>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/local/maryland/man-charged-armed-robbery-mail-carrier-montgomery-county/65-d9739bb9-81f4-4007-8894-355a11610533>

<sup>4</sup> <https://patch.com/maryland/bethesda-chevychase/usps-letter-carrier-robbed-gunpoint-chevy-chase-officials>

3. Steals mail containing personal identifying information may be charged with a felony and faces imprisonment up to 20 years; and
4. Steals mail from an elderly or vulnerable person may be charged with a felony and faces imprisonment up to 20 years.

Thank you for your consideration and I urge a favorable report for HB 318 with the Sponsor Amendment.