



**Testimony on behalf of the Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce**

*In Support of  
House Bill 948—Organized Retail Theft---Venue for Prosecution, Warrantless Arrest  
Authority, and Court Finding  
February 20, 2024  
House Judiciary Committee*

The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce (GBCC) was founded in 1926. Since then, the organization has grown to more than 550 businesses located throughout the Greater Bethesda area and beyond. On behalf of these members, we appreciate the opportunity to provide written comments in opposition to House Bill 948— Organized Retail Theft---Venue for Prosecution, Warrantless Arrest Authority, and Court Finding.

With the increase in organized retail theft in recent years, the Greater Bethesda Chamber appreciates the introduction of House Bill 948. This bill seeks to address an issue that impacts Montgomery County and jurisdictions across the state of Maryland. Just last summer, the Montgomery County Police Department arrested a group accused of stealing large amounts of items from eleven stores in the county, the loss suffered by these stores totaling just under \$50,000. Organized retail theft impacts the safety and well-being of retail employees and customers and impedes a businesses' ability to operate.

On behalf of our retail members, we appreciate Delegate Tole's leadership on this issue and urge a favorable vote on House Bill 948.