



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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SB 11

DATE: January 21, 2025

SPONSOR: Senator Watson

ASSIGNED TO: Judicial Proceedings

CONTACT PERSON: Sara Morningstar (Sara.Morningstar@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: Favorable (Montgomery County Department of Police)

Organized Retail Theft Act of 2025

Senate Bill 11 seeks to combat the growing problem of organized retail theft by defining the offense in Maryland law and allowing prosecutions for aggregations of thefts across jurisdictions. Under the bill, an individual who steals property with an aggregate value of at least \$1,500 but less than \$25,000 could be convicted of a felony punishable with up to five years in prison or a \$10,000 fine or both. For thefts of at least \$25,000 but less than \$100,000, a felony conviction could be punishable with up to 10 years in prison or a fine of \$15,000 or both. And for thefts of over \$100,000, a felony conviction could be subject to up to 20 years in prison or a fine not exceeding \$25,000 or both. Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich supports the bill.

According to *The Impact of Retail Theft & Violence*, a December 2024 report released by the National Retail Federation, retail theft has dramatically increased over the past five years. The crime has not been limited to petty shoplifting but has extended to sophisticated and aggressive theft and large-scale fencing rings adept at trafficking in stolen goods worth millions of dollars in secondary markets. It has impacted not only Maryland businesses and local stores' stability, but the crime also has had a pernicious effect on our neighborhoods and customers' experiences.

Late last year, Montgomery County Executive Elrich joined a letter organized by the Maryland Retailers Alliance to State legislative leaders urging adoption of legislation in 2025 to allow appropriate felony charges to be brought against individuals engaged in organized retail crime in Maryland. Nine states across the country plus the District of Columbia enacted similar measures in 2024 to curb organized retail theft.

The Montgomery County Executive requests that 2025 be the year to make curbing organized retail theft a legislative priority in Maryland and urges that the Committee adopt a favorable report on Senate Bill 11.