



**State of Maryland**  
**Department of State Police**  
Government Affairs Section  
Annapolis Office (410) 260-6100

**POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

**DATE:** February 19, 2020

**BILL NUMBER:** Senate Bill 598                      **Position:** Support

**BILL TITLE:** Criminal Law - Organized Retail Theft

**REVIEW AND ANALYSIS:**

This legislation seeks to establish that multiple thefts committed by the same person in multiple counties or one scheme or continued course of conduct may be aggregated and prosecuted in any effected county. This legislation also seeks enhanced penalties for person with previous theft conviction who commit theft again.

In recent years the instance of organized retail crime rings in Maryland has increased. There are organized retail crime rings that commit thefts throughout many Maryland counties and the surrounding states. The rings will work in groups. They not only commit thefts from retail establishments, but also commit credit card fraud, identity theft and merchandise return theft.

In just one case investigated by the Department in Southern Maryland, the investigators discovered the ring was operating in Maryland and Virginia and identified losses in excess of \$100,000. There are other cases in jurisdictions all over Maryland that show the same pattern.

For these reasons, the Department of State Police urges the Committee to give Senate Bill 598 a favorable report.