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February 9, 2021

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21402

In re: Sente Bill 385: Organized Retail Theft

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of The Home Depot's nearly 9,000 associates and 50 facilities in the state of Maryland, I write in support of Senate Bill 385 (S.B. 385) addressing the serious issue of Organized Retail Theft.

Last year, The Home Depot alongside several retail peers testified in favor of a similar bill, including expert testimony from one of our corporate investigators. Our position remains unchanged – organized retail theft is a serious threat to the safety of our customers, associates, and consumers at large. We applaud you and the Committee for considering this issue.

Organized retail theft is a gateway crime, led by nefarious actors who seek to incent individuals to steal with promises of big payouts on the other end. Ultimately, the leaders of these crime rings fly under the radar and evade prosecution because they conduct their misdeeds (both the theft of merchandise and subsequent sale of merchandise) in multiple counties, across state lines, and even abroad. Our internal asset protection team has numerous examples of where known actors have operated for years without prosecution because of arcane information-sharing and collaboration roadblocks.

We have been clear that we do not seek to tighten laws with respect to petty theft, including theft by individuals acting under the direction of organized crime leaders. Rather, we see value in proposals like S.B. 385 that would allow better cooperation among law enforcement and our in-house investigators to get to the root cause of this insidious crime: the leaders of organized retail crime rings and the facilities and platforms that “fence” these stolen goods.

Quite often, these stolen goods are aggregated and sold on unregulated online platforms. This avenue is the new pawn shop; and shorts the state of its due tax revenue. It also fails to provide basic retail covenants: guarantees of authenticity, integrity, or – in some cases – warranty or

other protections. Consumers do not know they are buying stolen goods from these nefarious actors until it is too late.

We ask the committee to give S.B. 385 a favorable report, and are happy to answer any questions you may have following your hearing.

Respectfully,

Matt

Matthew Campion | THE HOME DEPOT

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