

**Testimony for the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**Wednesday, January 31st, 2024**

**SB 100 - Criminal Law - Organized Retail Theft**

**Unfavorable**

Hello Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the committee,

I write to express my unwavering opposition for Senator Watson's bill, SB 100. This legislation does nothing to address the root causes of why people in many instances are forced to steal to survive.

Many people who commit these robberies are doing so to support their family, afford food, pay for housing, healthcare, and more. The answer to these economic issues is ensuring Marylanders have jobs that pay a living wage, so they can afford the necessities of life.

Unfortunately, this legislation does not give people the tools to thrive in the state without committing crimes of poverty, it instead further criminalizes survival tactics. Not only will this legislation make it harder for people, who are incarcerated for theft, to obtain well-paying jobs upon release, it will also put a financial burden on people by making them pay the store for items that are most likely insured.

Sen. Watson's bill puts corporations and businesses before community members. Our state should be taking steps to raise the standard of living and economic security of residents rather than contributing to our incarcerated population. I urge the committee to provide an unfavorable report on SB 100.

Respectfully,

Carlos Childs