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The Maryland House of Delegates  
House Judiciary Committee  
Room 101, House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

April 1, 2024

Chairman Clippinger,

My name is Brian Gamberini and I'm the Sr. Manager, State and Local Government Relations for The Home Depot. On behalf of our nearly 10,000 associates across 41 stores and 59 total facilities in Maryland, I am here today in support of S.B. 100, bi-partisan legislation sponsored by Senator Watson targeting Organized Retail Crime (ORC) in Maryland.

S.B. 100 contains language targeting ORC that will help Maryland take steps to stop this brazen theft. It provides prosecutors another tool in their toolbox to go after these repeat offenders and gives them the deference to use it when prosecuting these criminals.

ORC presents an enormous challenge to retailers and consumers. As a low-risk, high-reward operation that appeals to criminal organizations, ORC poses both a financial and public safety risk. ORC is not petty shoplifting, nor is it victimless. It is a sophisticated operation where career criminals orchestrate the theft of large quantities of merchandise – typically targeting items that can easily be stolen, resold and monetized. These criminals are savvy and exploit the law, retailers, and public trust for financial gain while putting the safety of consumers and retail workers at risk.

The fact is that retailers were faced with many challenges over the last few years, but ORC is one that has clearly grown over time, and its impact has caused The Home Depot and many of our peers to take measures that we would not have considered years ago.

At The Home Depot, we've been locking up product, employing off-duty police offers and security guards, and putting police cars at the front of our stores along with many other tactics. As you can see, we are dedicated to addressing this type of theft and despite these efforts, the problem continues, and we have tragically even lost associates to these encounters. When we have an opportunity to stop these repeat thefts, The Home Depot will work with law enforcement and prosecutors to provide them the support they need.

S.B. 100 gives prosecutors in Maryland the ability to aggregate crimes across jurisdictions. Criminals do not discriminate between stores or the size of the cities. ORC happens everywhere – in urban and suburban areas and everywhere in between. Jurisdictions surrounding Maryland are acting right now, including DC, that recently passed its own ORC law. We need to arm MD prosecutors with the right tools at their disposal to go after these criminals.

We ask the Committee to take decisive action to prevent the increase in ORC in Maryland and ask for a favorable report on S.B. 100. Thank you for your consideration.

Brian

Brian Gamberini  
The Home Depot, Mid-Atlantic Region  
Sr. Manager, State and Local Government Relations