

JARED SOLOMON
Legislative District 18
Montgomery County

DEPUTY SPEAKER PRO TEM

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Evaluation Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 312
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
301-858-3130 · 410-841-3130
800-492-7122 Ext. 3130
Fax 301-858-3053 · 410-841-3053
Jared.Solomon@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 805 – The Safe Carrier Act House Judiciary Committee, February 18, 2025

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, Colleagues, thank you for the opportunity to present on HB 805 – The Safe Carrier Act, legislation to create a criminal penalty for mail theft under state law that did not previously exist and outlines penalties for stolen mail and stolen “arrow keys” (a tool to access mail receptacles).

The need for this bill is threefold:

1. It is difficult to determine the value of stolen mail which impedes the State’s Attorney’s office from pursuing prosecution under the Maryland criminal law statute.
2. Currently if the federal government chose to, they could investigate and prosecute a case of mail theft in Maryland. If found guilty, an individual could be fined or imprisoned not more than 5 years, or both. HB 805 would allow a State’s Attorney’s office to pursue a case of mail theft if the federal government declined to prosecute the case. The bill allows the federal government to target its resources on larger, more complex cases while enabling state prosecutors to pursue smaller, yet still egregious, state cases.
3. Mail theft and the assault of postal carriers is a growing concern throughout Maryland and the current federal statute is not a strong enough deterrent to prevent mail theft. HB 805 strengthens the penalty for mail theft and imposes clear penalties.

There are an increasing number of incidents where mail is taken directly out of the blue mailboxes or mail carriers are held up at gun point for their “arrow keys” to gain access to multiple mailboxes in a neighborhood.

Recent Incidents of Mail Theft in Maryland

- In July 2022, there were 6 incidents of mail theft in less than 24 hours, including Takoma Park, Wheaton, Beltsville, and Columbia, MD as well as Northeast and Southeast DC.¹
- In August 2022, 4 defendants were charged with theft of mail and the unlawful possession of postal service keys in Bethesda and Silver Spring.²

¹ <https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/police/investigators-mail-carriers-robbed-gunpoint-dc-maryland-24-hours/65-ef9763d9-be6a-418c-8506-2a827d2be91a>

² <https://patch.com/maryland/bowie/4-face-charges-mail-theft-possessing-postal-service-keys>

- In 2022, according to federal officials, at least 13 robberies involving USPS letter carriers have happened in the greater Washington, D.C. metropolitan area between May 23 and July 7.
- In January 2023, a man in Silver Spring was accused of robbing a U.S. Postal carrier at gun point.³
- In April 2023, a postal worker in Chevy Chase was threatened with a gun and robbed of USPS property.⁴

What's Specifically in HB 805?

The bill, written in collaboration with the United State Postal Inspection Service, the Montgomery County State's Attorney's office, and counsels on both the Judiciary and Judicial Proceedings Committee strengthens state law on mail and arrow key theft. Under the bill a person who:

1. Commits mail theft of up to 15 pieces of mail may be charged with a misdemeanor and faces imprisonment for up to 6 months and/or a fine of up to \$1,000;
2. Commits mail theft of 16 or more pieces of mail may be charged with a felony and faces imprisonment for up to 2 years and/or a fine of up to \$2,000;
3. Commits mail theft of any amount of mail using an "arrow key" may be charged with a felony and faces imprisonment for up to 5 years and/or a fine of up to \$5,000; and
4. Possesses an arrow key with the intent to steal mail may be charged with a felony and faces imprisonment for up to 3 years or a fine of up to \$3,000 or both.

This bill will help protect our communities and restore trust and faith in our mail system, one of the bedrock services in America that goes back to the founding of our nation.

As a reminder, this bill passed the Senate unanimously in 2024 after amendments and we worked extensively over the interim to streamline and work through issues to get the bill in its current posture. Thank you for your consideration and I urge a favorable report for HB 805.

³ <https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/local/maryland/man-charged-armed-robbery-mail-carrier-montgomery-county/65-d9739bb9-81f4-4007-8894-355a11610533>

⁴ <https://patch.com/maryland/bethesda-chevyCHASE/usps-letter-carrier-robbed-gunpoint-chevy-chase-officials>