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DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Judiciary Committee

*Subcommittees*

Civil Law and Procedure

Public Safety



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Barlett and all Judiciary Committee Members**

**I am asking for your support for House Bill 179-Organized Retail Theft Act of 2025.** In the 2024 session, the bill passed unanimously out of the committee, and in the House. However, the Bill got stalled in the Senate.

The alarming rise in retail theft, as evidenced by the staggering \$112 billion loss in the United States in 2022, necessitates urgent legislative action.

The impact on Maryland retailers alone who lost \$1.4 billion in revenue- translates to \$29.21 per capita. Small businesses, constituting a vital component of our economy, are particularly vulnerable, with 75% reporting monthly profit losses ranging from \$500 to \$2,500. Moreover, the burden of increased prices to compensate for these losses affects all consumers.

According to the Prince George's County Police- we averaged about 125-200 reported thefts per month in 2022.

A couple in Maryland stole \$6,400 from an Ulta Beauty store and traveled from county to county and state to state, stealing nearly \$160,000 worth of goods.

Stores across Maryland are locking up basic household items, making it extremely inconvenient for our constituents to get items like deodorant, shaving cream, detergent, and toothpaste. This is completely unacceptable- our community, businesses and residents deserve better!

Recognizing the severity of retail theft, thirty-two states have already enacted new Organized Retail Crime laws, acknowledging the transboundary nature of organized retail theft. California, a more progressive State, recently passed sweeping legislation in 2024.

In conclusion, I urge my committee to consider the significance of HB179 and its potential to safeguard our economy and State. It is crucial, that we begin to take steps to address organized retail theft at the State level. If passed, this bill will undoubtedly have a lasting positive impact on businesses and communities across Maryland.

Thank you for your time and consideration and I urge a favorable vote.

Karen Toles