



Testimony on behalf of the Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce

*In Support of
House Bill 179—Organized Retail Theft Act of 2025
January 10, 2025
House Judiciary Committee*

The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce (GBCC) was founded in 1926. Since then, the organization has grown to more than 600 businesses located throughout the Greater Bethesda area and beyond. On behalf of these members, we appreciate the opportunity to provide written comments in opposition to House Bill 179— Organized Retail Theft Act of 2025.

With the increase in organized retail theft in recent years, the Greater Bethesda Chamber appreciates the introduction of House Bill 179. This bill seeks to address an issue that impacts Montgomery County and jurisdictions across the state of Maryland. In 2023, the Montgomery County Police Department arrested a group accused of stealing large amounts of items from eleven stores in the county, the loss suffered by these stores totaling just under \$50,000. Just his past year, the Montgomery County Department of Police coordinated with Homeland Security Investigations and the Internal Revenue—Criminal Investigations targeting three individuals responsible for trafficking a large amount of stolen goods from retailers in Montgomery County and through the Washington, DC metro area. Organized retail theft impacts the safety and well-being of retail employees and customers and impedes a businesses' ability to operate. If economic development is to be a priority, this is an issue that needs to be addressed.

On behalf of our retail members, we appreciate Delegate Tole's leadership on this issue and urge a favorable vote on House Bill 179.