



House Bill 0179

Organized Retail Theft Act of 2025

Position: **FAV**

Date: **January 14, 2025**

To: **Judiciary**

On behalf of the Caroline County Commissioners, we wish to express our strong support for **House Bill 179 - The Organized Retail Theft Act of 2025**. This important legislation addresses the growing issue of organized retail theft across Maryland and provides law enforcement agencies with critical tools to combat these crimes effectively.

HB 179 would allow law enforcement to prosecute thefts committed as part of a coordinated series or continuing pattern across multiple counties. This approach will streamline investigations, improve coordination, and enhance the ability of law enforcement to hold perpetrators accountable, regardless of where the crimes take place.

We are also pleased to note that both the Caroline County Sheriff's Office and the Maryland Sheriff's Association fully support this legislation. The bill's provisions, including the clear definition of organized retail theft and the enhanced penalties for such crimes, will equip our Sheriff's Office with the authority needed to better protect local businesses and residents from these offenses.

Furthermore, we appreciate the bill's provision to merge convictions for organized retail theft with other theft convictions for sentencing purposes. This will help ensure a consistent judicial process and discourage repetitive criminal behavior.

The Caroline County Commissioners believe that HB 179 represents a positive step in improving public safety and protecting the local economy. We strongly urge the committee to move this bill forward for passage.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We are confident that the passage of this legislation will significantly strengthen efforts to combat organized retail theft in our communities and across Maryland.

Sincerely,

J. Travis Breeding, President

cc: Caroline County Sheriff's Office