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

January 21, 2025

Chairman Clippinger,

On behalf of our nearly 10,000 associates across 41 stores and 59 total facilities in Maryland, I am submitting testimony in support of H.B. 179, bi-partisan legislation sponsored by Delegate Toles targeting Organized Retail Crime (ORC) in Maryland.

H.B. 179 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.

Similar legislation was passed out of this Committee last legislative session, and we ask that you all once again take decisive action to address this issue in Maryland. H.B. 179 will give prosecutors in Maryland the ability to aggregate crimes across jurisdictions. Jurisdictions surrounding Maryland are acting right now, including DC, recently passed and authorized 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 action once again this year and prevent the increase in ORC in Maryland and ask for a favorable report on H.B. 179. Thank you for your consideration.

Brian

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