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February 14, 2025

The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chairperson, House Judiciary Committee
House Office Building, Room 100
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Clippinger and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of the Frederick County State's Attorney's Office, I write in support of House Bill 1073, with amendments to the penalty provision as proposed below, which has the intended purpose of prohibiting the theft of mail and packages from intended recipients.

Whether it be the news or cases coming across my desk, this crime is at epidemic levels. It may be one of the few remaining universal joys to order an item online, track its shipment and delivery, and then locate that item at your house. And, as equally frustrating is being advised you received a package, being unable to find it, only to learn it was stolen after delivery. With package delivery being such a convenient means for busy Marylanders to obtain the items they want and need, the frequency of this type of theft has spiked, as has stealing from mailboxes.

Cases I have reviewed have involved thieves watching for mail or delivery trucks, following delivery trucks, or even arranging for delivery of items to the victim. This is all done with the intention of intercepting and stealing mailed or delivered packages before the victim takes possession of them.

While home surveillance systems have assisted in identifying and apprehending these culprits, the current theft law structure connects the level of consequence for the crime to the value of the item(s) stolen. While there are certainly circumstances where the amount stolen reaches into the thousands of dollars, we are typically seeing these thefts yielding under \$1,500.00 in value. Under Maryland Code Annotated, Criminal Law section 7-104, for a first offense, an offender is only facing 6 months and/or a fine of \$500.

The epidemic level of this offense, as well as the frustration incurred upon the victim when this crime occurs, warrants specific deterrence and a potential consequence greater than 6 months in jail. I particularly appreciate the clear and simple prohibition and penalty wording of the bill.

That said, I would amend the bill's penalty section to provide for a maximum penalty, for a first offense, of eighteen (18) months. I would further recommend raising the penalty to a maximum of five (5) years for any subsequent offense, as deterrence to repeatedly engaging in this crime.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide support for this bill and I urge this Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 1073.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason S. Shoemaker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jason" being the most prominent.

Jason S. Shoemaker,
Chief, Economic Crimes Unit