



April 4, 2024

Honorable Kevin McCarty
Chair, Assembly Committee on Public Safety
1020 N Street, Room 111
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for AB 2943 (Zbur and R. Rivas) – Crimes: Shoplifting

Chair McCarty:

The California Retailers Association and the organizations listed below are pleased to support Assembly Bill 2943, the comprehensive plan to combat retail theft that plagues our state. This bill has many crucial elements to help law enforcement and protect our businesses, including: creating a new crime targeting “serial” retail thieves, specifying that the value of thefts from different victims can be aggregated to reach the threshold for grand theft, expanding the use of diversion and rehabilitative programs like drug court through increased supervision for shoplifting and petty theft, expanding tools for police to arrest for shoplifting based on a witness's sworn statement or video footage of the crime, and extending the ability of police to keep repeat offenders and those committing organized retail theft in custody.

The creation of the “serial” retail thief’s criminal statute is crucial to holding repeat offenders accountable. This crime would come with a penalty of up to three years for possession of stolen property with intent to resell. Acknowledging the difficulty of proving intent to sell in court, the author specifies that evidence of intent can include repeated conduct or possession of a quantity of goods inconsistent with personal use. Additionally, this bill does not require proof that a defendant acted with another person and applies to the secondary sellers (fences). We believe these changes are adequate for charging repeat offenders and are a sufficient deterrent.

In an effort to give law enforcement the necessary and critical tools to combat retail, this bill allows for officers to arrest shoplifters, as defined in P.C. §459.5, based on the probable cause of video footage showing the offender committing the crime or based on a sworn statement of a witness. Additionally, retailers would be incentivized to observe/report retail theft activity and provide officers with sworn statements that can be used to apprehend repeat offenders.

We ask the Assembly Committee on Public Safety pass AB 2943.

Sincerely,



Ryan Allain
Director, Government Affairs
California Retailers Association

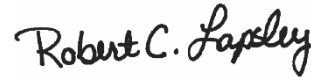


Mark Smith
UCAN Advocate
United Chamber Advocacy Network (UCAN)

On behalf of:



Matthew Hargrove
President & Chief Executive Officer
California Business Properties Association
BOMA California
NAIOP California



Rob Lapsley
President
California Business Roundtable



Tracy Hernandez
Founding CEO
Los Angeles County Business Federation (BizFed)



Amanda Walsh
Vice President of Government Affairs
Orange County Business Council



Sara Catalán
President and CEO
Catalán Consulting on behalf of OC TAX



Matthew Sutton
Sr. Vice President, Government Affairs+ Public Policy
California Restaurant Association



Mike Roos
President
Southern California Leadership Council