



April 4, 2024

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

RE: Support for AB 1802 (Jones-Sawyer) – Crimes: Organized theft

Chair McCarty:

The California Retailers Association and the organizations listed below are pleased to support Assembly Bill 1802, the indefinite extensions of the organized retail theft criminal statute (P.C. §490.4) and the CHP's Organized Retail Crime Task Force (ORCTF), both of which are currently due to sunset in 2026. This measure extends the pairing of an effective criminal statute with a state-level entity dedicated to enforcing it, both of which are essential in the fight against organized retail crime (ORC). We strongly support these extensions.

ORC is defined as theft or fraudulent activity conducted with the intent to convert illegally obtained merchandise, cargo, cash, or cash equivalent into financial gain, often through the subsequent sale of the stolen goods. ORC typically involves a criminal enterprise that organizes multiple theft rings across several retail stores and employs a fencing operation to sell the illegally obtained goods for financial gain.

Investigating and prosecuting ORC is a complex undertaking, involving investigations that can be many months in length and can involve multiple jurisdictions. The ORCTF is a dedicated entity with the resources to conduct these investigations, educate other law enforcement agencies on how to address ORC, and establish relationships with retailers and asset protection professionals. As a statewide task force, the ORCTF is uniquely positioned to coordinate and oversee investigations involving local law enforcement agencies across multiple cities or counties, or to assist in local investigations where needed. California will not stem the tide on ORC without this kind of dedicated, state-level commitment. This measure sends the message that ORC will not be tolerated in California.

Per the Governor's Office, in 2023, the CHP increased proactive ORC operations by over 310%, made more than 1,000 arrests (a 109% year-over-year increase) and recovered 187,515 items stolen from retailers (38,600 more items than 2022). Both the organized retail theft criminal statute (P.C. 490.4) and the Organized Retail Crime Task Force (ORCTF) have proven successful in protecting California's businesses and communities from organized retail crime.

We ask the Assembly Committee on Public Safety pass AB 1802.

Sincerely,



Ryan Allain
Director, Government Affairs
California Retailers Association

On behalf of:



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



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



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



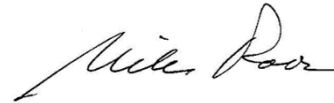
Brenda Bass
Policy Advocate
California Chamber of Commerce



Mark Smith
UCAN Advocate
United Chamber Advocacy Network (UCAN)



Amanda Walsh
Vice President of Government Affairs
Orange County Business Council



Mike Roos
President
Southern California Leadership Council