



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo, Buttenschon, Miller, Picente and Maciol urge governor to sign bill establishing Organized Retail Crime Task Force

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO August 3, 2023

| ISSUE: **ORGANIZED RETAIL THEFT; SMALL BUSINESSES; CRIME**



New York State Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-C-Rome, Assemblywoman Marianne Buttenschon, D-Marcy, Assemblyman Brian Miller, R-C-New Hartford, and Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente Jr. gathered today at Chanatry's Homestown Market in Utica to urge the governor to sign legislation that they hope will help crack down on and prevent organized retail crime at local businesses and establishments.

The legislation (S6714/A6568), which has been passed by the Senate and Assembly, establishes the New York State Organized Retail Crime Task Force and will be sent to the governor to be either signed into law or vetoed. If the bill is signed into law, it will bring together a variety of stakeholders - including those in law enforcement, prosecutors, retailers and retail employee advocates – to review current laws and provide recommendations to help prevent retail theft, enhance consumer protections and address the economic impact in the state.

Organized retail crime is estimated to be a \$100 billion problem for the retail industry in the United States, according to the 2022 Retail Security Survey. Retailers, on average, experienced a 26.5% increase in organized retail crime incidents from 2021 to 2022. Additionally, eight in ten retailers reported that violence and aggression associated with organized retail crime increased in 2021.

“I have heard from business owners who have fallen victim to retail theft and have continued to seek out ways to address this issue,” **Sen. Griffo said.** “While I recognize that we must do more than just talk about this matter, I am hopeful that this task force will offer ideas and solutions that can be implemented to reduce organized retail crime and protect businesses, employees and consumers. I urge the governor to sign this bill into law so that we can help local business owners, many of whom are still struggling as we continue to recover from the coronavirus pandemic.”

“Retailers and establishments across the state, and right here in Oneida County, are suffering at the hands of thieves that are stealing away their livelihoods,” **Oneida County Executive Picente said.** “I stand with Senator Griffo and urge the governor to sign legislation establishing the Organized Retail Crime Task Force and protect our local businesses owners, employees and consumers from financial and physical harm.”

“The establishment of the Retail Crime Task Force is essential to fighting the pressing challenge of retail crime,” **Assemblyman Miller said**. “Local business owners continue to be impacted by organized retail crime rings run by brazen thieves. Amidst a time when small businesses are still trying to compensate for economic changes, many have already been forced to close their brick-and-mortar locations due to the surge in organized retail crimes. It is our hope that this task force will develop realistic resolutions that can be executed in order to protect the business owners, employees and consumers alike.”

“According to the 2022 Retail Security Survey, organized retail crime is estimated to be a \$100 billion loss for the retail industry in the United States,” **Assemblywoman Buttenschon said**. “In addition, eight out of ten retailers reported that violence and aggression associated with organized retail crime has increased. My office has heard of many situations in our district that reconfirm these statistics. This legislation, which I co-sponsored, will provide for a task force comprising of law enforcement, prosecutors, retailers and retail employee advocates, to produce an independent and expert opinion on the most effective ways for the state to combat organized retail crime activity in stores and local communities.”

“Our business community, especially our small business community, is getting crushed by shoplifters and they are desperate for us to help them,” **Oneida County Sheriff Robert Maciol said**. “The crime statistics are undeniable and prove that this is a very serious problem plaguing our state. This legislation is a step in the right direction, and I urge the governor to quickly sign this bill so that the Task Force can get to work. We have an obligation to protect our communities from these thieves.”

Sen. Griffo, along with Assemblywoman Buttenschon, and Oneida County Executive Picente, previously convened a meeting of regional law enforcement and business community representatives to discuss and explore solutions to reduce organized retail crime.

There were several ideas raised and discussed in an effort to address the issue. These included:

- Advocating for and advancing state legislation, as well as potential local ordinances.
- Providing additional resources and funding to small businesses to help them improve and enhance security.
- Establishing small business coalitions to allow for better networking and communication relative to criminal justice initiatives and concerns, as well as enhanced interaction with law enforcement.
- Incorporating and utilizing a uniform approach with law enforcement relative to the issue.
- The potential public exposure of shoplifters, as well as examining and researching effective preventive practices undertaken by communities across the country.

Agencies and organizations participating in the meeting included the Utica Police Department, Rome Police Department, Oneida County Sheriff's Office, New York State Police, Oneida County District Attorney's Office, Oneida County Emergency Services, New Hartford Police Department, Oneida County Law Enforcement Coalition, Mohawk Valley Crime Stoppers, the Greater Utica Chamber of Commerce and the Genesis Group and Chamber Alliance of the Mohawk Valley.

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RELATED LEGISLATION

2023-S6714B

- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Vetoed By Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Establishes the New York state organized retail crime task force

May 05, 2023

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by **Kevin Thomas**

Do you support this bill?