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The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Chairman, Senate Judiciary
135 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jim Jordan
Chairman, House Judiciary
2138 Rayburn House Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary
326 Russell Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jaime Raskin
Ranking Member, House Judiciary
2242 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

April 28, 2025

Dear Senators Grassley and Durbin, Congressmen Jordan and Raskin:

I am writing on behalf of the National District Attorneys Association (NDAA), the oldest and largest national organization representing over 6,000 state and local prosecutors in the country in support of the Combating Organized Retail Crime Act of 2025. As President of NDAA I know this legislation would greatly benefit prosecutors across the country as they fight against organized crime by improving the information sharing among Federal, State, Local, and Tribal law enforcement agencies and retail organizations.

I am also the elected District Attorney for San Diego County, California, the fifth largest county in the United States and know from my experience that organized retail crime, has increased in violence or threats of violence to subdue employees and shoppers while robbing stores of their most valuable and easily diverted merchandise, has been a growing concern to retailers, consumers, law enforcement, and communities across America.

Due to my experience, I testified in front of the House Subcommittee on Counterterrorism, Law Enforcement, and Intelligence in 2023 for a hearing titled From Festive Cheer to Retail Fear: Addressing Organized Retail Crime. Unfortunately, the three key challenges I highlighted in 2023 are still the largest obstacles our communities are facing to curb organized retail crime. Criminal networks are becoming more sophisticated, which presents law enforcement and prosecutors with a constantly evolving problem on how to best identify, investigate, and prosecute the bad actors. I advocated for the need for an organized task force model to share information, connect the dots and track the entire criminal syndicate from the ground level booster to the fences and criminal heads in order to effectively eradicate them. Under current laws, once a quality investigation is done, the heavy lifting is not. Inadequate legal framework to charge the criminals under does not exist in most states or is not sufficient enough to deter and appropriately punish criminals engaged in organized retail theft. Finally, the lack of coordination

and information sharing among retailers, law enforcement, and other stakeholders has progressed but can still improve.

I was honored to testify alongside President of the National Retail Federation and other experts on the devastating financial impact and the human cost that these crimes perpetrate. This is a growing problem in large and small, urban and rural communities. I focused in my testimony on the fact that small and large businesses are the largest employer in our nation and that we cannot tolerate the fear and instability that this crime causes hard working employees. While some may argue financial crime is victimless, organized retail crime and retail theft are equal opportunity destroyers of communities and must be addressed to ensure healthy and vibrant communities. Organized retail crime not only leads to economic instability in a community, but it also opens the door to more violent crime, and fuels other criminal activity such as human and drug trafficking.

The Combating Organized Retail Crime Act would help tackle the challenges communities face by expanding federal enforcement of criminal offenses related to organized retail crime and establishing an Organized Retail Crime Coordination Center within the Department of Homeland Security to align Federal, State, local, territorial, and Tribal efforts. Most importantly, State, and local law enforcement agencies will receive assistance with their investigations of organized retail crime groups. The importance of this collaboration and information-sharing will strengthen existing law enforcement networks that focus on combatting illicit fentanyl dealers, elder scams and other organized crime rings, gangs and cartels.

As we start a new Congress, NDAA encourages Members in both chambers to address organized retail crime theft by providing law enforcement the legal tools and assistance in collaboration that is needed to properly address this issue.

Thank you for your efforts on this critical concern that plagues communities across the nation. I am confident that, with your leadership, we can finally see the swift passage of the Combating Organized Retail Crime Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Summer Stephan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Summer Stephan
President
National District Attorneys Association
District Attorney
San Diego County