

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs Bill to Protect New Jersey Businesses Against Retail Theft

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Legislation Expands on Commitment to Create Safer Communities for Businesses, Retail Workers, and Consumers

NORTH BRUNSWICK – Governor Phil Murphy today signed [A4755/S3587](#)

[/https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://t.e2ma.net/click/job3m/nrddit/njftpb...!!J30X0ZrnC1o0tbA!LJTTKeRcrnqac6v8KuVs05DcOK71N4TOFHx6MktzP4sNwynevM0DPDucrJ0](https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://t.e2ma.net/click/job3m/nrddit/njftpb...!!J30X0ZrnC1o0tbA!LJTTKeRcrnqac6v8KuVs05DcOK71N4TOFHx6MktzP4sNwynevM0DPDucrJ0) which establishes and upgrades certain crimes related to retail theft, provides that repeat offenders can be sentenced to extended prison terms, addresses gift card fraud, and requires the Attorney General to take actions to combat organized retail theft.

"No business owner or retail worker should have to fear for their safety or endure the financial loss caused by organized retail theft," said **Governor Murphy**. "Over the past few years, we have worked to crack down on organized retail theft, which threatens livelihoods and public safety. With today's bill, we are taking decisive action to combat this growing threat and protect businesses and workers statewide."

To impose stricter penalties for these crimes and establish a dedicated effort to combat organized retail theft, the bill specifically:

1. Upgrades any simple assault to an aggravated assault when committed against a retail employee engaged in the performance of their duties
2. Upgrades to a second-degree crime the failure to pay a tax, fee, penalty, or interest due if accrued through conduct as a leader of an organized retail theft enterprise
3. Establishes fostering the sale of stolen property as a disorderly persons offense
4. Provides that the value of merchandise involved in a shoplifting offense may be used to upgrade the offense
5. Provides that a person may be sentenced to an extended prison term for repeat convictions related to retail theft
6. Requires merchants that sell gift cards to ensure that the gift cards are enclosed in secure packaging and that they display a consumer notice related to gift card fraud provided by the Division of Consumer Affairs
7. Requires the Attorney General to undertake steps as deemed appropriate to effectively investigate, prosecute, and deter organized retail theft, which may include establishing a retail theft unit, task force, or other office or initiative

"We look forward to working with our law enforcement partners to continue fighting sophisticated organized retail theft rings using the tools provided by the Legislature and Governor Murphy," said **Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin**. "This new law upgrades and, in some circumstances, provides for extended terms of imprisonment for certain retail theft crimes, as well as addressing gift card fraud. It will give us additional ways to better protect New Jersey retailers, their employees, and their customers from victimization."

"This bill is a major step forward in our fight against organized retail theft," said **Colonel Patrick J. Callahan, Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police**. "By imposing stricter penalties, protecting retail employees, and cracking down on gift card fraud, we are sending a strong message that these crimes will not be tolerated. Governor Murphy's leadership ensures law enforcement has the tools to hold offenders accountable and safeguard New Jersey businesses, employees, and consumers."

With the signing of this bill, Governor Murphy brings New Jersey in line with surrounding states, including New York and Pennsylvania, that have already taken similar measures to combat organized retail theft.

The prime sponsors of this bill, which passed unanimously in both chambers, are Senator John Burzichelli and Assemblyman Joe Danielson. Other primary sponsors include Senator Holly Schepisi and Assemblymembers Alex Saucikie and Heather Simmons.

"This law will help fight the retail crime rings that operate on a much larger scale than individual shoplifters who take products for personal use. These are professional shoplifters backed by criminal organizations that plan large-scale thefts and fence the products on the gray market, often selling across state lines or through the internet. It's grown into a billion-dollar criminal enterprise that costs the average family an estimated \$500 a year," said **Senator Burzichelli**. "The health and safety of consumers are put at additional risk when these gangs resell consumable items or medical products that were stored in compromised conditions or sold with altered expiration dates. This is a true consumer protection law that will help safeguard the public's health and save consumers money."

"The surge of organized retail crime has cost businesses billions, driven up prices for consumers, and has put employees' safety at risk as they face growing threats of violence from organized theft rings," said **Senator Schepisi**. "We've witnessed an alarming rise in large-scale theft operations across the nation, especially here in New Jersey, where stolen merchandise is swiftly sold for illicit gains. With the Governor's signature, we can now impose tougher penalties to deter criminals and their theft organizations, and, most importantly, enhance protections for both retailers and their customers. At the heart of this issue is the safety of our communities. Retail employees shouldn't have to fear for their safety, and shoppers deserve peace of mind that the products they buy are safe and haven't been tampered with in any way."

"New Jerseyans continue to feel the impact of organized retail theft crimes in their wallets and their pocketbooks," said **Assemblyman Danielson, Chair of the Public Safety and Preparedness Committee**. "The legislation signed into law today will help law enforcement as they fight this growing threat. It will also reduce the burden faced by consumers who purchase goods from these retail establishments."

"The signing of this legislation into law is a critical step in combating organized retail crime, including smash-and-grab thefts, which threaten businesses, retail workers, and consumers—especially in the pharmaceutical sector," said **Assemblyman Saucikie**. "By strengthening penalties and enforcement, this bill supports law enforcement efforts and safeguards hardworking employees. With neighboring states like New York and Pennsylvania already taking action, New Jersey must act now to prevent becoming a prime target for these crimes. It ensures a safer retail environment and reinforces protections for both businesses and consumers across the state."

"The repercussions of organized retail theft in New Jersey are both tangible and far reaching," said **Assemblywoman Simmons**. "It's incumbent upon us as legislators to do what we can to quash criminal activity by ensuring law enforcement has the resources needed to fight this type of crime."

"I am grateful to Governor Murphy and the Legislature for taking action to protect our communities and local businesses," said **Jason Ravitz, Vice President of Retail Operations, Ravitz Family Markets**. "This measure will enhance the safety of our store associates and customers while helping to combat the financial impact organized retail theft has on businesses and the state. It's a win-win for everyone, especially for family-owned businesses like ours that cannot afford these losses."

"In recent years, retailers across New Jersey have been targeted by professional, highly organized criminal enterprises. And while retailers are experiencing a higher frequency

of thefts overall, even more troubling has been the growing threat of violence,” **said John Holub, President, New Jersey Retail Merchants Association.** “This legislation not only addresses gift card fraud and prolific shoplifters, but also the safety of our employees. The legislation being signed into law today will go a long way in giving the Attorney General the necessary tools to combat these growing threats.

“NJBIA thanks Governor Murphy for signing this important legislation into law, as well as the strong bipartisan sponsorship and support it received in the Legislature before reaching his desk,” **said Michele Siekerka, President & CEO, New Jersey Business & Industry Association.** “Organized retail crime is a serious issue that collectively costs businesses billions of dollars, increases product prices for consumers and sometimes even puts employees’ safety at risk. Further, the investigations that go into prosecuting these cases are often a heavy draw on crucial enforcement resources. The increased penalties for these illegal operators, the added consumer protections and legal resources dedicated to prosecute and deter these crimes as part of this new law are a win-win-win for all.”

“We are pleased to join in this effort to fight to protect businesses, store employees and shoppers who depend on affordable, quality products that can be purchased safely and confidently. Together, under the leadership of Governor Murphy and Attorney General Platkin, we will drastically reduce the amount of organized retail theft that has become an epidemic in New Jersey,” **said Linda Doherty, President & CEO, New Jersey Food Council.** “New Jersey is taking a defiant stance and recognizing that organized retail crime is not just petty shoplifting from the neighborhood grocer. We are fighting a behemoth operation of professional thieves that are methodically moving from one town to another in New Jersey, and across state lines, stealing merchandise off shelves and reselling them in the gray marketplace. With the Governor’s signature, professional thieves will no longer see New Jersey as an ‘opportunity’ for organized retail crime enterprises. This new law signals there’s a new sheriff in town.”

“The signing of A4755/S3587 marks a crucial step in the fight against organized retail crime, which has significantly impacted the business community,” **said Christina Renna, President and CEO, Chamber of Commerce Southern New Jersey.** “This legislation strengthens protections for both retailers and consumers, and the Chamber of Commerce Southern New Jersey applauds these proactive measures to create a more safe and thriving economic environment.”

“Governor Murphy’s signing of S-3587 is a critical step toward protecting New Jersey businesses, employees, and consumers from the devastating impacts of organized retail crime,” **said Michael Egerton, Executive Vice President, New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce.** “This legislation will help curb large-scale theft operations that not only endanger retail workers but also drive up costs for hardworking New Jersey families. Strengthening penalties and enforcement tools is essential to ensuring the safety of our communities and the stability of our local economy. We applaud the bipartisan leaders who championed this bill and thank Governor Murphy for taking action to address this urgent issue.”

“The Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey applauds Governor Murphy for signing this critical legislation to crack down on organized retail theft,” **said Chairman Luis O. De la Hoz and President & CEO Carlos Medina.** “Fraud hurts all of us—but especially the small Hispanic-owned businesses that are the backbone of our communities and disproportionately targeted. We stand with our governor echo the law’s directive: New Jersey stands with entrepreneurs, not criminals. We thank our legislators for recognizing the urgent need to protect our storefronts, employees and local economies.”

“The passage of this legislation marks a significant step toward protecting New Jersey’s small businesses and communities from the devastating impact of organized retail theft. By strengthening penalties and enhancing enforcement efforts, we are sending a clear message that these crimes will not be tolerated,” **said John E. Harmon, Sr., Founder, President & CEO, African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey.** “The African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey fully supports this bill and commends our legislators for their commitment to safeguarding the economic vitality of our state.”

“The Punjabi Chamber of Commerce appreciates the commitment of our Governor and elected officials for providing enhanced penalties for retail theft and assault on retail workers. These protective measures are required to protect not only retailers and their workers, but the public at large,” **said Gurpreet Singh Pasricha, Founder & Trustee, Punjabi Chamber of Commerce.**

“Retail theft damages businesses and it leaves people feeling unsafe. Today’s bill signing gives law enforcement the tools to show thieves there are serious consequences to terrorizing our communities,” **said Peter Andreyev, President, New Jersey State Policemen’s Benevolent Association.**

“The Fraternal Order of Police - New Jersey State Lodge supports A4755/S3587 passage into law that will enhance consumer and business protections from fraud and theft, while addresses a root cause of these criminal activities,” **said Robert W. Fox, President, Fraternal Order of Police – New Jersey State Lodge.** “The FOP thanks the Governor and the legislative sponsors and leadership for addressing these needs, enhancing protections, and creating greater penalties for those who prey upon our citizens and businesses.”

“Retail workers have faced growing challenges on the job, and this law gives them the recognition and support they deserve. Our members work hard to serve their communities, and they should be able to do so in a safe and respectful environment. We thank Governor Murphy and legislative leaders for taking this meaningful step to support retail workers across New Jersey,” **said Charles Hall, President, RWDSU-UFCW Local 108.**

“Retail theft doesn’t just hurt businesses – it puts our workers at risk and drives up prices for everyday New Jersey families. This law is a needed step to protect the people on the frontlines, especially our union members working in retail, who deserve to feel safe at their jobs. We thank Governor Murphy and the Legislature for recognizing the seriousness of this issue and taking action,” **said Sam Ferraino, President, UFCW Local 360 & Southern NJ Central Labor Council.**

“Retail theft has become more organized, putting workers and everyday shoppers in harm’s way, and hurting small businesses. We thank the Governor and leaders in the legislature for supporting this law that will strengthen our state’s overall approach to the problem and sends a clear message that New Jersey is taking this threat seriously. Our troopers remain ready to support efforts that protect the public and hold offenders accountable,” **said Wayne Blanchard, President, NJ State Troopers Fraternal Association**

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