



## **STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF SB 340 A**

**To: House Committee on Judiciary**  
**From: United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555**  
**4/26/23**

Dear Chair Kropf, Vice Chairs Andersen and Wallan, and members of the committee:

For the record, my name is Madison Walters, and I am the political liaison and a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on SB 340 A, which makes policy recommendations to address organized retail crime in Oregon.

UFCW Local 555 is the largest private sector labor union in Oregon. Our members come from a number of industries, including grocery, retail, food processing, manufacturing, and healthcare. We are a diverse group of workers who take pride in acting as a strong collective voice for working people.

We are also a member of the Organized Retail Crime Task Force, which is made up of industry and labor stakeholders who are negatively impacted by organized retail crime. In the past year, 57% of retailers have reported an increase in organized retail crime, including retail theft rings that involve multiple people who engage in frequent theft, and who often resell the stolen property online. ([U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#)) As the prevalence of these crime rings continues to grow, we are increasingly concerned about how rampant theft has threatened worker safety.

Our members in retail and grocery stores are often the first endangered by organized crime in the workplace. Our members and retail employees report being threatened and even physically assaulted while on the job. Additionally, organized retail crime has forced some retail stores to reduce hours and close certain locations, putting employees' job security at risk.

SB 340 makes critical policy changes to amend and strengthen current statutes to allow law enforcement and prosecutors greater flexibility to detect, deter, and hold accountable those who commit organized retail theft.

I'd like to highlight a specific piece of SB 340 A, which amends the theft statute (ORS 164.055) to make it a felony if during the course of a theft in the second degree the individual recklessly engages in conduct which creates a substantial risk of serious physical injury. When a theft occurs, employees

**UNITED FOOD & COMMERCIAL WORKERS LOCAL 555**

7095 SW Sandburg Street • PO Box 23555 Tigard, Oregon 97281-3555 • Office: 503-684-2822 • Fax: 503-620-3816 • [ufcw555.org](http://ufcw555.org)



are instructed to not apprehend or get involved for their own safety, but often these organized crime rings engage in reckless behavior that causes harm. Smash and grab operations, mob style coordinated thefts with multiple participants running through the stores, and perpetrators escaping through employee-only areas have all caused harm to retail employees. As organized retail theft groups engage in more aggressive actions towards employees, this change will aim for appropriate accountability for such actions.

SB 340 A takes the steps necessary to address organized retail theft and hold perpetrators accountable. Let's ensure that we are doing all we can to create a safe environment to work and shop. Thank you for your consideration, and I strongly urge your support for SB 340 A.

Madison Walters  
Political Liaison  
UFCW Local 555

**UNITED FOOD & COMMERCIAL WORKERS LOCAL 555**

7095 SW Sandburg Street • PO Box 23555 Tigard, Oregon 97281-3555 • Office: 503-684-2822 • Fax: 503-620-3816 • [ufcw555.org](http://ufcw555.org)

