



March 26, 2025

**TO:** Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

**FR:** Derek Sangston, Oregon Business & Industry

**RE:** Support for SB 275

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Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary. For the record, I am Derek Sangston, policy director and counsel for Oregon Business & Industry (OBI).

OBI is a statewide association representing businesses from a wide variety of industries and from each of Oregon's 36 counties. In addition to being the statewide chamber of commerce, OBI is the state affiliate for the National Association of Manufacturers and the National Retail Federation. Our 1,600 member companies, more than 80% of which are small businesses, employ more than 250,000 Oregonians. Oregon's private sector businesses help drive a healthy, prosperous economy for the benefit of everyone.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 275. SB 275 is a companion bill to SB 960, which this committee unanimously passed earlier this month, and would help ensure retailers and law enforcement have the necessary tools to detect, deter, and hold accountable those who commit organized retail theft, while providing improved customer and employee safety as organized retail theft groups engage in more threatening behaviors.

With the dash-one amendment, SB 275 would help law enforcement leverage the investment made by SB 960 by allowing prosecutors the ability to better hold all individuals committing organized retail theft accountable, further minimizing the ability of retail theft operations to use creative actions to evade law enforcement or retail loss prevention teams, and expand the allowable uses of the grants provided by SB 960 to include theft prevention, detection, and surveillance equipment. After months of deliberation, the Oregon Organized Retail Theft Task Force agrees these changes are necessary to disrupt the organized criminal rings that steal billions of dollars of goods from retailers and threaten the safety of workers and customers throughout Oregon.

Organized retail theft is a substantial problem plaguing the entire country. It remains an urban issue. It remains a rural issue. Organized retail theft has contributed to financial losses totaling more than \$121 billion in the U.S., and 76 percent of retailers report their workers being the victims of violence from organized retail criminals.

In Oregon alone, it is estimated that organized retail crime has cost the state \$1.4 billion in lost economic activity and reduced employment by over 8,000 jobs. Estimates show Oregon has missed out on over \$40 million in lost tax revenue. But this is not just about the economic losses. Organized retail crime presents very serious risks to the safety and wellbeing of customers, employees, and those who happen to be in proximity.

By passing SB 275, as provided by the dash-one amendment, the Oregon legislature would provide the stakeholders working to stop organized retail theft important tools to stop the theft of billions of dollars of goods and keep the customers and workers engaged in the retail industry safe. I urge your support. Thank you for your consideration.

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