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## **Texas Joins National Awareness Push on “Fight Retail Crime Day”**

*Day of action emphasizes spike in retail theft, advocates state and federal action*

**AUSTIN, TX** – Texas is joining states across the nation to formally recognize today, Thursday, Oct. 26, 2023, as Fight Retail Crime Day. Retail crime accounted for more than \$112 billion in industry losses in 2022, according to a [recently-released report](#).

“A top priority for Texas retailers is cracking down on the organized retail crime that fuels the black-market supply chain,” said John McCord, Executive Director of the Texas Retailers Association (TRA). “We applaud the Texas Legislature and Gov. Greg Abbott for making a record-setting investment this year to signal to would-be criminals that Texas is tough on retail theft. We look forward to continued state and federal action on this important issue for our economy and public safety alike, including working closely with Comptroller Glenn Hegar’s retail crime task force.”

Organized Retail Crime (ORC) is a term which refers to criminal enterprises that aren’t just “smash-and-grabs” or shoplifters, but rather established networks of criminals who consistently steal large quantities of merchandise for resale on the black market or other nefarious use.

Retailer survey results indicate ORC incidents are increasingly violent and aggressive, putting both employees and the general public in harm’s way. In some instances, retailers have been forced to shut down locations altogether due to public safety concerns.

The Texas Legislature made its most significant financial investment to combat ORC in state history during the 2023 regular session. The state budget for the FY 2024-25 biennium added more than \$2.5 million in General Revenue and seven full-time employees to create an Organized Retail Theft Prevention Unit within the Texas Department of Public Safety’s Criminal Investigations Division.

“Retailers nationwide are facing unprecedented levels of crime and theft,” said TRA Board Chair and Director of Public Relations for Albertsons Companies Southern Division, Christy Lara. “A top priority of the retail industry is serving the local community, which means doing everything we can to provide a safe shopping environment for customers and a secure workplace for employees. TRA is glad to see Texas leading on this issue.”

Additional legislation, [HB 1826](#) by Rep. Chris Turner and Sen. John Whitmire, directed the Comptroller of Public Accounts to appoint a task force to study organized retail theft prevention, analyzing its impact on state sales tax collection and making further policy recommendations for the next Texas legislative session. Task force members were [announced](#) by Comptroller Hegar in September.

“Organized retail crime has a direct impact on Texans’ wallets and the overall Texas economy,” said Comptroller Hegar. “When crime rings consistently steal large quantities of product, law-abiding Texans are forced to pay more at the store and feel unsafe in their own communities. Our task force is determined to get to the bottom of just how much this type of crime is costing our economy and Texas taxpayers and to provide crucial guidance to lawmakers working to reverse the spread of this criminality.”

TRA has coined the term “crimeflation” to describe this rise in the general price level attributed to an increase in organized retail crime. On top of general inflation, crimeflation impacts retail consumers on a daily basis, from the grocery store to the shopping mall.

“HB 1826 passed with strong bipartisan support during the regular legislative session and shows that Texas is dedicated to rooting out these organized crime rings,” added bill author, Representative Chris Turner. “This task force is critical so that we get the state working with local law enforcement, retailers, and online marketplaces to crack down on organized retail theft.”

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*The Texas Retailers Association is made up of global, national, state, and local retail businesses dedicated to improving the lives of the consumers who power the Texas economic engine. For more information on this issue or to speak with an ORC expert for a news story, please contact [jmccord@txretailers.org](mailto:jmccord@txretailers.org).*