



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo, Buttenschon, Miller and Picente: Governor's veto of Organized Retail Crime Task Force bill disappointing

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO November 21, 2023

| ISSUE: **ORGANIZED RETAIL THEFT; SMALL BUSINESSES; CRIME**

New York State Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-C-Rome, Assemblywoman Marianne Buttenschon, D-Marcy, and Assemblyman Brian Miller, R-C-New Hartford, and Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente Jr. today expressed disappointment that the governor vetoed legislation that would have established the New York State Organized Retail Crime Task Force and helped businesses in the state.

The bill (S6714/A6568), which was supported by all three legislators, would have brought together a variety of stakeholders - including those in law enforcement, prosecutors, retailers and retail employee advocates – to review current laws and provide recommendations to help prevent retail theft, enhance consumer protections and address the economic impact in the state.

Organized retail crime is estimated to be a \$100 billion problem for the retail industry in the United States, according to the 2022 Retail Security Survey. Retailers, on average, experienced a 26.5% increase in organized retail crime incidents from 2021 to 2022. Additionally, eight in ten retailers reported that violence and aggression associated with organized retail crime increased in 2021.

“It is disappointing that the governor vetoed this bill,” **Sen. Griffo said.** “Organized retail crime continues to be a major problem for businesses across the state. This bill would have provided ideas that could help address this issue and bring some relief to business owners. I will continue to work to ensure that New York’s businesses are successful.”

“I am disappointed the governor did not sign this legislation,” **Assemblywoman Buttenschon said.** “New methods and protections must be put in place to reduce existing issues with theft in our communities and this task force would be charged with reviewing existing laws and provide recommendations to reduce shoplifting and organized retail crime statewide. It is important to support our hardworking local businesses and this task force would review solutions to creating a safer environment for business owners as well as customers.”

“It is discouraging that the governor vetoed this legislation,” **Assemblyman Miller said.** “This legislation would have provided an important first step in combating the growing problem of organized retail crime that is ravishing our businesses locally and across the state. I will continue to advocate on behalf of the business owners.”

“Gov. Hochul has missed a golden opportunity to rescue New York businesses with this misguided veto,” **Oneida County Executive Picente said.** “Retailers and establishments across the state, and right here in Oneida County, are suffering at the hands of thieves that are stealing away their livelihoods. An Organized Retail Crime Task Force would have protected our local businesses owners, employees and consumers from financial and physical harm.”

Sen. Griffo, along with Assemblywoman Buttenschon and Oneida County Executive Picente, previously convened a meeting of regional law enforcement and business community representatives to discuss and explore solutions to reduce organized retail crime.

There were several ideas raised and discussed in an effort to address the issue. These included:

- Advocating for and advancing state legislation, as well as potential local ordinances.
- Providing additional resources and funding to small businesses to help them improve and enhance security.
- Establishing small business coalitions to allow for better networking and communication relative to criminal justice initiatives and concerns, as well as enhanced interaction with law enforcement.
- Incorporating and utilizing a uniform approach with law enforcement relative to the issue.
- The potential public exposure of shoplifters, as well as examining and researching effective preventive practices undertaken by communities across the country.

Agencies and organizations participating in the meeting included the Utica Police Department, Rome Police Department, Oneida County Sheriff's Office, New York State Police, Oneida County District Attorney's Office, Oneida County Emergency Services, New Hartford Police Department, Oneida County Law Enforcement Coalition, Mohawk Valley Crime Stoppers, the Greater Utica Chamber of Commerce and the Genesis Group and Chamber Alliance of the Mohawk Valley.

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RELATED LEGISLATION

2023-S6714B

- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Vetoed By Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Establishes the New York state organized retail crime task force

May 05, 2023

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by **Kevin Thomas**

Do you support this bill?