



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

## Griffo, Buttenschon and Picente convene working group to discuss retail thefts and shoplifting incidents

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO December 21, 2021

| ISSUE: **SHOPLIFTING; CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC; LAW ENFORCEMENT**

As shoplifting surges across the nation, New York State Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-C-I-Rome, Assemblywoman Marianne Buttenschon, D-I-Marcy, and Oneida County Executive Anthony Picente Jr. recently convened a meeting of regional law enforcement and business community representatives to discuss ways to crack down on and prevent thefts at local establishments.

The meeting comes after area business owners reached out to the senator and assemblywoman with concerns about an increase in shoplifting that they had observed.

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.

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.

Meeting participants hope to finalize and announce initiatives in the coming months that will help reduce and alleviate instances of shoplifting in the region.

“Our small businesses have faced significant challenges and struggles during the coronavirus pandemic. They shouldn’t have to worry about daily thefts from their establishments as well,” **Sen. Griffo said.** “This discussion, which will continue, was a good first step that allowed us explore ways to reduce shoplifting in the area and provide for some much-needed relief to local business owners.”

“Shoplifting and retail theft effect the bottom lines of businesses and consumers and can’t be tolerated” **Assemblywoman Buttenschon said.** “Not only are we seeing inflation increase the price of items we use every day, but when retailers and businesses lose money because of theft, or have to invest in additional security measures, that cost is passed on to everyone.”

“These are hard times for the small businesses of Oneida County, and we have done everything under our power to support them throughout the COVID-19 pandemic,” **Oneida County Executive Picente said.** “On top of all they have been through, falling victim to theft is a slap in the face that will not be tolerated. We must do all we can to snuff these crimes out, and I thank Sen. Griffo and Assemblywoman Buttenschon for spearheading this effort to address this serious issue.”

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