
SENATE BILL 5944

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2022 Regular Session

By Senators King, Short, and L. Wilson

Read first time 01/25/22. Referred to Committee on Law & Justice.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing an organized retail theft task
2 force; creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** It is the intent of the legislature to
5 combat crimes that relate to stealing, embezzling, or obtaining by
6 fraud, false pretenses, or other illegal means of retail merchandise
7 for the purpose of reselling the items or for reentering the items
8 into commerce.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The Washington state organized retail
10 theft task force is established.

11 (2) The Washington state patrol shall administer the task force
12 as provided in this section.

13 (a) The Washington state patrol shall collaborate with law
14 enforcement agencies, retailers, and scrap metal dealers to identify
15 products that are most frequently targeted for theft and establish
16 the most effective methods for deterring organized retail theft.

17 (b) The task force is comprised of members as provided in this
18 subsection.

19 (i) The president of the senate shall appoint one member to the
20 task force from each of the two largest caucuses of the senate.

1 (ii) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint
2 one member to the task force from each of the two largest caucuses in
3 the house of representatives.

4 (iii) The president of the senate and the speaker of the house of
5 representatives jointly shall appoint the following members:

6 (A) One member representing the Washington state patrol;

7 (B) One member representing the Washington association of
8 sheriffs and police chiefs;

9 (C) One member representing the Washington association of
10 prosecuting attorneys;

11 (D) One member representing the office of public defense;

12 (E) One member representing the superior court judges'
13 association;

14 (F) One member representing the district and municipal court
15 judges' association;

16 (G) One member representing the association of Washington cities;

17 (H) One member representing the office of the attorney general;

18 (I) One member representing the scrap metal recycling industry;

19 (J) One member representing the Washington organized retail crime
20 association; and

21 (K) One member representing the online and technology industry.

22 (3) The legislative membership shall convene the initial meeting
23 of the task force no later than September 1, 2022.

24 (4) The membership of the task force shall choose the task
25 force's cochair, which must include one legislator and one
26 nonlegislative member.

27 (5) The task force shall review state laws related to organized
28 retail theft. The task force shall develop recommendations for the
29 purpose of:

30 (a) Deterring the occurrence of organized retail theft;

31 (b) Developing tools to identify and recover stolen goods; and

32 (c) Lowering costs to victims of theft.

33 (6) The task force may develop recommendations related to:

34 (a) The maintenance and accessibility of law enforcement
35 organized retail theft;

36 (b) The traceability of payments related to transactions
37 involving organized retail theft; and

38 (c) Identifying and working with online marketplaces and third-
39 party sellers to reduce opportunities for resale of stolen goods.

1 (7) The task force shall report its findings and recommendations
2 to the governor and the appropriate committees of the legislature by
3 October 1, 2023.

4 (8) The Washington state patrol shall administer and provide
5 staff support and facilitation services to the task force. The
6 Washington state patrol may, when deemed necessary by the task force,
7 contract with one or more appropriate consultants to provide data
8 analysis, research, and other services to the task force for the
9 purposes provided in subsections (5) and (6) of this section.

10 (9) Legislative members of the task force shall be reimbursed for
11 travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative
12 members are not entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses if they
13 are elected officials or are participating on behalf of an employer,
14 governmental entity, or other organization. Any reimbursement for
15 other nonlegislative members is subject to chapter 43.03 RCW.

16 (10) The Washington state patrol shall make any educational
17 information resulting from the task force available to law
18 enforcement agencies and retailers and is encouraged to publicize the
19 task force to the general public.

20 (11) The Washington state patrol shall provide a report on the
21 task force to the governor and appropriate committees of the
22 legislature by October 1, 2023. The report must describe the
23 progress, results, and any findings of the task force and the outcome
24 of any criminal investigation into the thefts.

25 (12) This section expires November 1, 2023.

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