



***There's a new push to stop organized retail theft.*** ORC is costing retailers anywhere from \$30-40 billion a year. "If there's something on the shelf that can command a price on the black market, then that retailer is vulnerable to organized retail theft," said Ted Potrikus of the Retail Council of New York State. In New York, a series of hearings are being held that make the case for a package of six bills. One of these bills would give prosecutors more power to prosecute thieves who stay below the "felony threshold" by crossing county lines to hit more stores.

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***Organized Retail Crimes Targeted - Long Island Press Releases— By New York State Senate Committee on Consumer Protection***



(Albany, NY) State Senator Lee M. Zeldin (R, C, I- Shirley), Chairman of the Senate Consumer Protection Committee, held a hearing today on Organized Retail Crimes (ORC). Last week, the Consumer Protection Committee, passed a package of six bills (S.6954-A, S.6955-A, S.6956, S.6957-A, S.6958-B and S6959-A) designed to crack down on ORC. The legislation now awaits final senate approval.

"We must protect consumers and businesses impacted as victims of this expanding crime network. This legislative package finally puts teeth into the crackdown on organized retail crime," said Senator Zeldin.

Invited to give testimony at today's hearing included:

- Retail Council of New York State
- Price Chopper Grocery Stores
- Town of Colonie Police Department (Albany County)
- Food Industry Alliance of New York State
- Walgreens Pharmacy
- Walmart
- EBay
- Shop Rite

"There has been quite a proliferation of organized retail crime over the past few years. Not only is organized retail crime expensive to our organization, but it causes our customers to incur additional costs. Astoundingly, organized retail crime accounts for 66% of our known external theft, but makes up only 20% of the incidence.

Individuals or groups that commit organized retail crime have learned to beat the current system. They travel from county to county and steal under the dollar threshold currently contained in the penal law so that they can avoid felony prosecution.

"We applaud the Senator for taking the lead on this important issue and addressing this growing problem," said David Golub, Senior Vice President Administration of Price Chopper.

The legislative package consists of six bills:

S.6956:

Defines "Organized Retail Crime", adds to the General Business Law the crime of "theft of retail merchandise with an aggregated value of \$1,000", and makes corresponding changes to the Penal Law to define such crime as "grand larceny in the fourth degree".

S.6958-B:

Relates to jurisdiction and venue for a pattern of criminal offenses, granting jurisdiction to any county when at least one of the crimes constituting a pattern occurs within the county.

S.6959-A:

Relates to prohibitions and penalties against persons who lead an organized retail theft enterprise by organizing, supervising, financing or managing such criminal activity.

S.6954-A:

Prohibits criminal practices with an access device and classifies such crime as a class B misdemeanor. This crime would subject individuals to criminal liability for certain actions taken with a fraudulent or counterfeit credit card or other devices that grant the holder access to money, goods, or services.

S.6955-A:

Prohibits retail sales receipt fraud and Universal Product Code fraud and provides for criminal penalties for such crimes.

S.6957-A:

Adds a new section to the General Business Law and a subdivision to Penal Law to provide that use of an emergency exit to facilitate a theft from a mercantile establishment is classified as "grand larceny in the fourth degree".

"Organized retail crime rings operate and threaten consumers in every part of this state," said Retail Council of New York State President and CEO James R. Sherin. "Senator Zeldin

recognized the danger immediately and responded with a package of bold and important bills that the retail industry wholeheartedly supports."

"This is not garden-variety, personal use theft," Mr. Sherin said. "It's highly organized, sophisticated, and dangerous criminal activity that demands a sophisticated and coordinated response. Coupled with the retail industry's partnership with law enforcement throughout the state, these bills will provide the tools necessary to protect consumers, preserve tens of millions in sales tax revenue now lost to ORC, and get the criminals off the street."

The legislative package is being carried in the Assembly by Assemblyman Michael Cusick (D- Staten Island).

"Senator Zeldin and I have introduced this legislative package of bills to tackle the growing epidemic of organized retail theft by crime rings of professional shoplifters who target retail stores in a variety of ways. These thieves are costing the industry approximately \$15-\$30 billion annually, which in turn means higher prices for consumers. This legislative package is a step forward to thwart these groups and individuals who are blatantly engaged in illegally obtaining retail merchandise," said Assemblyman Cusick. ([Source longislandexchange.com](http://longislandexchange.com)).

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***Possible ORC gift card gang busted in El Cerrito, CA*** Four people were arrested Sunday evening after an attempted shoplifting ended in a scuffle with store security. Thomecia Thompson and Cortni Keyes, both of Oakland, filled a basket with prepaid credit cards inside a store in the 11400 block of San Pablo Avenue about 6:30 p.m., then tried to leave without paying. Store security officers followed the pair into the parking lot and tried to detain them, but the two suspects jumped into a vehicle where two other people were waiting. A police officer on patrol nearby arrested the four suspects. Thompson and Keyes were arrested and booked. The other two suspects were cited and released. ([Source mercurynews.com](http://mercurynews.com))



**Looks like another ORC group hitting a Wal-Mart store in Wood River, IL and taking "Liquid Gold" - baby formula**

Police say three men filled a large blue container with hundreds of dollars worth of formula Sunday and they made off with a display full of the medication Prilosec. Anyone with information on the crimes is asked to call Wood River Police at 618-251-3114.

**Caught on tape, 2 suspects arrested breaking into Lowe's in Kentucky, \$70,000 in merchandise recovered.** The overnight thieves hot-wired a forklift to open a rear receiving door after they believed they had silenced the alarm system. Staging very expensive tools and equipment at the back door, the thieves never had a chance to get out of the store.



**Home Depot nabs two serial shoplifters in Louisiana.** Thefts are being tied to these two suspects that may be part of a larger group hitting Home Depot store in Oklahoma, Texas and Louisiana. The suspects (one man cross dressing as a woman) load up a shopping cart with thousands of dollars in high end tools and power equipment and run out the millworks door near the rear of the store.

**Gypsies' arrested for the theft of 40 iPhones.** A family of self proclaimed 'gypsies' entered the AT&T in Ballwin, MO, a suburb outside of St. Louis. Two of the customers distracting store employees while the third entered the business's back area, filled a garbage bag with the iPhones then ran out of the store. Police tracked down the mini van and five suspects, recovering 40 iPhones. Police believe that the group may have hit additional stores the same evening.