



TO: All Members of the California Legislature and Governor's Office

FROM: Coalition of business, local government, and public safety organizations

RE: Three pillars to addressing the rise in theft

DATE: January 29, 2024

The impacts that theft is having in our neighborhoods and commercial centers – be it retail, cargo, or residential – has reached a point that it is tangibly impacting virtually every Californian. While many of us have witnessed these incidents firsthand, almost all of us have encountered the physical barriers now being deployed to slow this escalating crisis. This letter is an initial effort by our organizations to center the policy discussions regarding retail theft around three core pillars – **Prevention, Enforcement, and Supervision.**

Prevention:

Addressing crime begins with prevention. This requires understanding that not all motives are the same. Identifying the cause and treating the symptom accordingly will produce the best outcome. In certain cases that may mean incentivized treatment and rehabilitation, in other cases it may require increased levels of consequence. However, we recognize that treatment alone has proven to be an inadequate solution without sufficient enforcement.

Enforcement:

One of the primary functions of our criminal justice system is to correct harmful and criminal behavior through rehabilitation, education, incarceration, or a combination of each. To be clear, mass incarceration is not the solution. However, the lack of meaningful consequences limits the effectiveness of preventative programs, as there is little reason to comply with required treatment. A key to addressing the problems our communities and businesses are experiencing is raising the level of consequences for those who repeatedly, and most severely, are causing significant harm.

Supervision:

Too many people who encounter the criminal justice system find themselves revolving in and out of that system. To have successful outcomes for people on supervision, we must create incentives that help people commit to treatment. By connecting people on supervision to services, while also instilling accountability through higher levels of supervision, we return appropriate consequences to the system without over-relying on incarceration. The flexibility to take individualized approaches to address criminal behavior strikes a balance that is cost-effective and imperative to make reform work.

Without all three pillars working in tandem, we fear that the significant problems we are facing will remain unaddressed. To contact the group organized under this letter, please reach out to Jonathan Feldman, at jfeldman@lawpolicy.com. We look forward to partnering with you to craft lasting solutions to this emerging crisis.

COALITION ORGANIZATIONS (alphabetical order):

American Petroleum and Convenience Store Association
Building Owners and Managers Association of California
California Association of Highway Patrolmen
California Business Properties Association
California Business Roundtable
California Chamber of Commerce
California District Attorneys Association
California Fuels and Convenience Alliance
California Grocers Association
California New Car Dealers Association
California Peace Officers Association
California Police Chiefs Association
California Retailers Association
California State Sheriffs Association
Chief Probation Officers of California
League of California Cities
NAIOP California
Peace Officers Research Association of California