



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Skyler Wonnacott
(916) 319-2009

Cooper Introduces Serial Theft Prevention Legislation *Bill will help combat organized theft crime rings and repeat offenders*

SACRAMENTO – At a press conference today, Assemblymember Jim Cooper (D-Elk Grove), along with bill sponsors: California Grocers Association, California Police Chiefs Association, and Crime Victims United California, and bill supporters: California Retailers Association, Amador County Sheriff Martin Ryan, and Amador County District Attorney Todd Riebe, announced the introduction of Assembly Bill 1326.

The bill will address the increasing recurrence of theft on our local businesses by changing the threshold for a felony from \$950 for the value of the individual occurrences of crime; to the aggregate amount of the crime value, in a 1-year period, totaling \$950 dollars. If passed by the Legislature, AB 1326 shall only become affective when submitted to and approved by the voters at a statewide election.

“Our local businesses are hurting,” said Assemblymember Jim Cooper. “Organized crime rings are targeting our retailers and it’s decimating their bottom-line, directly impacting consumers and the safety of the public.”

In 2014, theft-related crimes involving property valued less than \$950 were reduced to misdemeanors including shoplifting, commercial burglary, and check fraud. Since then, Californians have been directly impacted by a substantial increase in theft incidents committed by repeat offenders and organized crime rings.

“Since 2014, criminals have become emboldened to shoplift higher amounts of goods at higher rates,” said Ron Fong, California Grocers Association President and CEO. Adding that shoplifters and organized crime rings commit multiple thefts, day-after-day, but below the \$950 threshold. “This is bad for grocers who suffer high losses, bad for employees who are put in harm’s way, and bad for shoppers who ultimately pay the consequences at the register,” Fong added.

“Statewide data collected from police departments throughout California has shown an alarming increase in property crime when compared to the rest of the country,” states Ventura Police Chief Ken Corney, President of CPCA. “These numbers are more than statistics; they represent victims and an economic loss to our businesses and state. This legislation will help crack down on the repeat offenders and hold them accountable.”

“The real victims of organized serial theft are not necessarily retail stores, but the families struggling to make ends meet, while repeat offenders take advantage of a loophole in state law,” said Harriet Salarno, Crime Victims United California Co-Founder.

“When we make policy at the ballot box, we’re often left with unintended consequences,” said Todd Riebe, Amador County District Attorney. “Thanks to Assemblyman Cooper’s leadership, this bill will provide some meaningful penalties for those who engage in organized retail theft,” Riebe added.

AB 1326 is co-sponsored by the California Grocers Association, California Police Chiefs Association and Crime Victims United California. The bill will be heard by the Assembly in the coming months.

Links to audio and video from today’s news conference:

Includes statements from today’s presser by Assemblymember Jim Cooper; Ron Fong, President & CEO, California Grocers Association; Nina Salarno, President, Crime Victims United California; Ron Lawrence, Vice President, California Police Chiefs Association; Martin Ryan, Amador County Sheriff; and Bill Dombrowski, President, California Retailers Association.

Complete Video of AB 1326 News Conference
<https://vimeo.com/205119299> Password: AB1326

Complete Audio of AB 1326 news conference (17:50)
<https://caucus.asmdc.org/sites/default/files/audio/20170221AB1326SerialTheftCooperNewsConf.mp3>

Complete Remarks from Assemblymember Jim Cooper (2:05)
<https://caucus.asmdc.org/sites/default/files/audio/20170221AB1326SerialTheftCooperRemarks.mp3>

Audio Clip: Assemblymember Cooper says current law allows repeat offenders to commit the same crime over and over without facing a serious penalty (:09)
<https://caucus.asmdc.org/sites/default/files/audio/20170221AB1326SerialTheftCooper1.mp3>

Audio Clip: Assemblymember Cooper says all businesses, especially small businesses, are seeing a substantial increase in theft (:10)
<https://caucus.asmdc.org/sites/default/files/audio/20170221AB1326SerialTheftCooper3.mp3>

Audio Clip: Assemblymember Cooper explains what AB 1326 will do (:12)
<https://caucus.asmdc.org/sites/default/files/audio/20170221AB1326SerialTheftCooper4.mp3>

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Assemblymember Cooper represents the Cities of Sacramento, Elk Grove, Galt and Lodi.