

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 1474**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

***David Paul Linsky***

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act to improve criminal laws relative to organized retail theft.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>David Paul Linsky</i>	<i>5th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/17/2013</i>
<i>Chris Walsh</i>	<i>6th Middlesex</i>	
<i>James M. Murphy</i>	<i>4th Norfolk</i>	

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 1474**

By Mr. Linsky of Natick, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1474) of David Paul Linsky, Chris Walsh and James M. Murphy relative to the criminal penalties for organized retail theft. The Judiciary.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE HOUSE, NO. 3330 OF 2011-2012.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**In the Year Two Thousand Thirteen**

An Act to improve criminal laws relative to organized retail theft.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 266 of the General Laws, as so appearing in the 2010 Official  
2 Edition, is hereby amended by inserting the following new section:-

3 Section 30B. Unlawful Use of Theft Detection Shielding or Deactivation Devices

4 A person is guilty of unlawful distribution of a theft detection shielding device when he  
5 knowingly manufactures, sells, offers for sale or distributes in any way laminated or a coated bag  
6 or other devise intended to shield merchandise from detection by an electronic or magnetic theft  
7 detector.

8 A person is guilty of unlawful possession of a theft detection shielding device when he  
9 knowingly possesses any laminated or coated bags or devices intended to shield merchandise  
10 from detection by an electronic or magnetic theft detector, with the intent to commit (or aid or  
11 abet) theft.

12 A person is guilty of unlawful possession of a theft detection device deactivator or  
13 remover when he knowingly possesses any tool or device designed or adapted to allow, or is  
14 capable of allowing, the deactivation, or removal from any merchandise, of any theft detection  
15 device, with the intent to use such tool or device to deactivate any theft detection device on, or to

16 remove any theft detection device from, any merchandise without the permission of the merchant  
17 or person owning or lawfully holding said merchandise.

18 A person is guilty of unlawful distribution of a theft detection device deactivator or  
19 remover when he knowingly manufacturers, sells, offers for sale or distributes in any way tool or  
20 device designed or adapted to allow, or capable of allowing, the deactivation, or removal from  
21 any merchandise, of any theft detection device without the permission of the merchant or person  
22 owning or lawfully holding said merchandise.

23 A person is guilty of unlawful deactivation or removal of a theft detection device when  
24 he intentionally deactivates with intent to steal in a retail establishment a theft detection device  
25 on, or removes a theft detection device from, merchandise prior to purchase.

26 A violation of this Act shall be punished for a first offense by imprisonment in the house  
27 of correction for not more than two and one half years or by a fine of not more than one thousand  
28 dollars or by both such fine and imprisonment, and for a second or subsequent offense by  
29 imprisonment in the state prison for not more than five years, or by a fine of not more than  
30 twenty-five thousand dollars or by both such fine and imprisonment.

31

32 The activation of an anti-shoplifting or inventory control device as a result of a person  
33 exiting the establishment or a protected security device within the area within the establishment  
34 shall constitute reasonable cause for the detention of the person so exiting by the owner or  
35 operator of the establishment or by an agent or employee of the owner or operator, provided  
36 notice has been posted to advise the patrons that the establishment utilizes anti-shoplifting or  
37 inventory control devices. Each such detention shall be made only in a reasonable manner and  
38 only for a reasonable period of time sufficient for any inquiry into the circumstances surrounding  
39 the activation of the device and/or for the recovery of goods. Such taking into custody and  
40 detention by a law enforcement officer, security officer, merchant, merchant's employee or agent,  
41 if done in compliance with all the requirements of the foregoing subsection, shall not render such  
42 law enforcement officer, security officer, merchant, merchant's employee or agent, criminally or  
43 civilly liable, including any liability for false arrest, false imprisonment, unlawful detention,  
44 malicious prosecution, intentional infliction of emotional distress or defamation.

45 SECTION 2. Said Chapter 266 of the General Laws, as so appearing is hereby amended  
46 by inserting the following new section:-

47 Section 30C. Theft Using Emergency Exit to Avoid Apprehension or Detection

48 A person commits theft by emergency exit if that person intentionally takes possession  
49 of, carries away, transfer or causes to be transferred, any merchandise displayed, held, stored or  
50 offered by sale by any store or other retail mercantile establishment with the intent of depriving

51 the merchant of the possession, use of benefit of such merchandise or converting the same to the  
52 use of such person without paying to the merchant the value thereof and the person leaves a store  
53 by use of a designated emergency exit.

54 A violation of this Act shall be punished for a first offense by a fine of not less than two  
55 hundred and fifty dollars and not more than five hundred dollars, and for a second offense by  
56 imprisonment in the house of correction for not more than two and one half years or a fine not to  
57 exceed two thousand dollars, or by both fine and imprisonment and for subsequent offenses by  
58 imprisonment in the state prison for not more than five years, or by a fine of not more than five  
59 thousand dollars or by both such fine and imprisonment.

60 SECTION 3. Section 60 of chapter 266 of the general laws, as so appearing, is hereby  
61 amended by striking out the entire section and inserting in place thereof the following new  
62 section: -

63

64 Section 60. Whoever buys, receives or aids in the concealment of stolen or embezzled  
65 property, knowing it to have been stolen or embezzled, or whoever with intent to defraud buys,  
66 receives or aids in the concealment of property, knowing it to have been obtained from a person  
67 by a false pretense of carrying on business in the ordinary course of trade or whoever obtains or  
68 exerts control over property in the custody of any law enforcement agency, or any individual  
69 acting on behalf of a law enforcement agency, which is explicitly represented to him by any law  
70 enforcement officer or any individual acting on behalf of a law enforcement agency as being  
71 stolen and who intends to deprive its rightful owner permanently of the use and enjoyment of  
72 said property shall, if the value of such property does not exceed two hundred and fifty dollars,  
73 be punished for a first offense by imprisonment in a jail or house of correction for not more than  
74 two and one half years, or by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars; or if for a second or  
75 subsequent offense, or if the value of such property exceeds two hundred and fifty dollars, be  
76 punished by imprisonment in a state prison for not more than five years, or by a fine of five  
77 thousand dollars, or by both a fine and imprisonment. It shall not be a defense that the property  
78 was obtained by means other than through the commission of a theft offense if the property was  
79 explicitly represented to the accused as having been obtained through the commission of a theft  
80 offense.

81 SECTION 4. Said Chapter 266 of the General Laws, as so appearing is hereby amended  
82 by inserting the following new section:-

83 Section 30D. Enhanced Theft – Receiving & Concealing

84 It is not a defense to a charge of receiving stolen property that the property was obtained  
85 by means other than through the commission of a theft offense if the property was explicitly  
86 represented to the accused person as being obtained through the commission of a theft offense.

87

88 SECTION 5. Said Chapter 266 of the General Laws, as so appearing is hereby amended  
89 by inserting the following new section:-

90 Section 30E. Fraudulent/Bogus Receipts & Universal Product Codes

91 A person who, with intent to cheat or defraud a retailer, possesses, uses, utters, transfers,  
92 makes, alters, counterfeits, or reproduces a retail sales or return receipt, price ticket or a  
93 Universal Product Code Label, shall be punished for a first offense by imprisonment in the house  
94 of correction for not more than two and one half years or by a fine of not more than five hundred  
95 dollars or by both such fine and imprisonment, and for a second offense shall be punished by  
96 imprisonment in a house of corrections for not more than two and one half years or by a fine of  
97 not more than two thousand dollars or by both fine and imprisonment and subsequent offenses  
98 shall be punished by imprisonment in the state prison for not more than five years, or by a fine of  
99 not more than ten thousand dollars or by both such fine and imprisonment.

100 A person who, with intent to cheat or defraud a retailer, possesses \*fifteen (15) or more  
101 fraudulent retail sales or return receipts, price tickets, Universal Product Code Labels or  
102 possesses the device which purpose is to manufacture fraudulent retail sales receipts or Universal  
103 Product Code Labels, shall be punished by imprisonment in the state prison for not more than  
104 five years, or by a fine of not more than ten thousand dollars or by both such fine and  
105 imprisonment.

106 SECTION 6. Chapter 266 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
107 inserting the following new section:-

108 Section 60B. Pattern of Criminal Offenses

109 Venue for criminal actions to enforce the provisions of this Section, including criminal  
110 actions with respect to each of the alleged offenses included within a pattern of criminal  
111 offenses, as defined in this Section, that have allegedly been committed, attempted or conspired  
112 to be committed by a person or persons, shall be in any county in which at least one alleged  
113 criminal offense has occurred that constitutes part of the alleged pattern of criminal offenses, it  
114 being the intent of this section that one district court may have jurisdiction over all the conduct,  
115 persons and property which are part of, or are directly related to, each and all of the alleged  
116 criminal offenses forming part of the alleged pattern of criminal offenses. It is discretionary, not  
117 mandatory, to bring all criminal actions in one county when an alleged pattern of criminal  
118 offenses involves two or more counties.

119 Any person who engages in a pattern of criminal offenses in two or more counties in this  
120 state or who attempts or conspires with others to engage in a pattern of criminal offenses shall,  
121 upon conviction, be punishable by imprisonment in the house of corrections for a term not

122 exceeding two years, or imprisonment in the house of corrections for a term not exceeding one  
123 year, or by a fine in an amount not more than twenty-five thousand dollars, or by both such fine  
124 and imprisonment. Such punishment shall be in addition to and imprisoned on and after any  
125 penalty imposed for any offense involved in the pattern of criminal offenses.

126 For purposes of this act, "pattern of criminal offenses" means: Two or more criminal  
127 offenses are committed that are part of the same plan, scheme, or adventure; or a sequence of  
128 two or more of the same criminal offenses are committed and are not separated by an interval of  
129 more than thirty (30) days between the first and second offense, the second and third, and so on;  
130 or two or more criminal offenses are committed, each proceeding from or having as an  
131 antecedent element a single prior incident or pattern of fraud, robbery, burglary, theft, identity  
132 theft, receipt of stolen property, false personating, false pretenses, obtaining property by trick or  
133 deception, taking a credit or debit card without consent, or the making, transferring or receiving  
134 of a false or fraudulent identification card.

135 Jurisdiction and venue for a pattern of criminal offenses occurring in multiple counties in  
136 this state shall be determined as provided in this Section.

137

138 SECTION 7. Chapter 266 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by  
139 inserting the following new section:-

140 Section 30F. Organized Retail Crime

141 Organized retail crime shall be defined as the stealing, embezzlement, or obtaining by  
142 fraud, false pretenses, or other illegal means, of retail merchandise in quantities that would not  
143 normally be purchased for personal use or consumption for the purpose of reselling or otherwise  
144 reentering such retail merchandise in commerce; or the recruitment of persons to undertake, or  
145 the coordination, organization, or facilitation of, such stealing, embezzlement, or obtaining by  
146 fraud, false pretenses, or other illegal means.

147 An Organized Retail Crime Ring is defined as three or more persons who associate for  
148 the purpose of engaging in the conduct of organized retail crime.

149 In this section, "retail merchandise" means one or more items of tangible personal  
150 property displayed, held, stored, or offered for sale in a retail establishment or merchandise  
151 explicitly represented to the person as being stolen retail merchandise.

152 A person who is guilty of organized retail crime shall be punished by imprisonment in a  
153 state prison for a minimum term of not less than 1 year and a maximum term of not more than

154 10 years, if the aggregated value of the property or services involved in all crimes  
155 commitment by the individual or co-conspirators in an organized retail crime ring within the past

156 one hundred and eighty days is at least \$2,500 but less than \$10,000; or (2) by imprisonment in a  
157 state prison of not less than 2 years and a maximum term of not more than 15 years, if the  
158 aggregated value of the property or services involved in all crimes committed by the individual  
159 or co-conspirators in an organized retail crime ring within the past one hundred and eighty days  
160 is at least \$10,000 or more.

161 For purposes of this section, a series of thefts committed by the same person from one or  
162 more mercantile establishments over a period of one hundred eighty days may be aggregated in  
163 one count and the sum of the value of all the property shall be the value considered in  
164 determining the degree of the organized retail theft involved.

165 Thefts committed by the same person in different counties that have been aggregated in  
166 one county may be prosecuted in any county in which one of the thefts occurred.

167 Leader of Organized Retail Crime Enterprise.

168

169 A person is a leader of an organized retail theft enterprise if he conspires with others as  
170 an organizer, supervisor, financier or manager, to engage for profit in a scheme or course of  
171 conduct to effectuate the transfer or sale of shoplifted merchandise. A leader of organized retail  
172 crime may be punished by a fine of not more than \$250,000 or five times the retail value of the  
173 merchandise seized at the time of the arrest, whichever is greater and/or imprisonment in state  
174 prison for not more than twenty years.