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May 16, 2024

The Honorable Ramos
California State Capitol
1021 O Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 1772 (Ramos) Theft
Notice of Support**

Dear Assembly Member Ramos,

We write today on behalf of the Cities Association of Santa Clara County (CASCC), a Joint Powers Authority, an association of fourteen cities of the county and the elected representatives of more than 1.8 million Bay-Area residents. Since 1990, the city representatives have been gathering to discuss and find consensus and solutions for regional issues. The cities of our association are diverse and include cities of a few thousand people and a city of a million people.

On Thursday, May 9, the CASCC Board of Directors, at the recommendation of the Legislative Action Committee (LAC), voted to support Assembly Bill 1772, which would require the Department of Justice to conduct a study to determine the number of misdemeanor convictions for a theft offense when property was taken from a retail business during the COVID-19 state of emergency.

As you may know, retail theft continues to be a problem in nearly all California communities. For example, commercial burglary is at the highest rate since 2008. In fact, according to the PPIC, commercial burglary increased statewide since 2020, especially in larger counties with an increase of 13% among 14 of the 15 largest counties. Across Santa Clara County, cities are experiencing a significant increase in commercial burglaries. For example, in 2023 the city of Cupertino saw an increase of 244% in retail theft as compared to the previous year. To address rising theft, city officials need additional tools to reduce crime and improve the safety of their neighborhoods.

This bill would require the Department of Justice on January 1, 2026 to report to the Legislature the number of misdemeanor convictions for retail theft during the Governor's declared state of emergency during the COVID-19 pandemic. This would allow the Legislature to identify the rate of convictions misdemeanor retail theft offenses during a time related to a surge of theft rates.

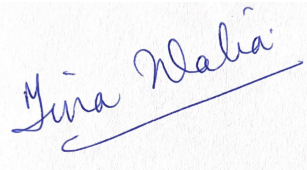
While AB 1772 (Ramos) is important to continuing to make progress on retail theft, this bill is only one part of a comprehensive solution that needs to include prevention, enforcement, and supervision. Identifying the rate of theft in comparison to the rate of conviction is just one of the methods that can help solve this growing problem and make our communities safer.

For these reasons, the CASCC is pleased to support AB 1772.

Sincerely,



Neysa Fligor
President, Cities Association of Santa Clara Co.
Councilmember, City of Los Altos



Tina Walia
Chair, CASCC Legislative Action Committee
Councilmember, City of Saratoga