



**KEVIN BARTON**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Washington County DA Supports Efforts to Change Oregon Law to Combat Organized Retail Crime**

HILLSBORO, Ore. (March 7, 2023) — The Washington County District Attorney’s Office joins the Oregon Organized Retail Crime Task Force in calling for the passage of Senate Bills 318 and 370 to address increasing retail crime in Oregon.

The Oregon Organized Retail Crime Task Force is a collection of key stakeholders, including Washington County District Attorney Kevin Barton, who have met over the past six months to discuss ways to address the growing problem of organized retail crime in Oregon. Task force members include law enforcement leaders along with business and labor leaders.

The Washington County District Attorney’s Office is proud to support the passing of Senate Bills 318 and 340. These two bills, taken together, provide funding for increased enforcement and better communication between Oregon’s Department of Justice, local police departments, and retailers. The bill also fixes gaps in Oregon’s current criminal code, making it easier to prosecute criminal organizations involved in organized retail theft.

“I am keenly aware of the challenges Oregon faces from increased organized retail crime,” said Washington County District Attorney Kevin Barton. “Retail theft impacts all members of our community, including both large and small businesses and employees and customers alike. As the nature and scope of these crimes change, so must our laws evolve, which is why passage of SB 318 and 340 is important.”

A public hearing for Senate Bills 318 and 340 will be held in the Senate Judiciary Committee on Wednesday, March 8 at 1:00 p.m.

A copy of District Attorney Barton’s written testimony is attached.

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March 6, 2023

RE: Legislation Addressing Organized Retail Crime: SB 318 and SB 340

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

Please accept this written testimony in support of two important bills that address organized retail crime in Oregon—SB 318 and SB 340.

As District Attorney for Washington County, I am keenly aware of the challenges our community faces from increased organized retail crime. These crimes impact all members of our community, including both large and small businesses and employees and customers alike. As the nature and scope of these crimes evolve, it is important that our laws also evolve to keep pace.

For the past six months I have worked with members of the Organized Retail Crime Task Force to identify funding and policy solutions and I believe SB 318 and SB 340 represent both.

SB 318 contains two key funding components. First, it will fund additional resources at the Oregon Department of Justice (DOJ) which will allow enhanced communication and coordination between DOJ and local investigators and prosecutors. Second, SB 318 creates a local grant program, administered through the Criminal Justice Commission, which will allow local law enforcement to obtain needed resources to engage in enforcement actions. Both important funding recommendations will send a strong message to the community that organized retail theft is unacceptable.

SB 340 contains important policy components that address gaps in the law. These include:

- Adding Organized Retail Theft statute to the repeat property offender statute;
- Amending the Organized Retail Theft statute so that it has the same time period for stolen property value aggregation as regular felony theft;
- Amending the value of stolen property statute to remove barriers to prosecuting organized retail theft;
- Amending the venue statutes to reflect the reality of cross-county crime; and,

- Amending the theft statute to make it a felony for those who engage in conduct that endangers the safety of others during a theft.

With the passage of both SB 318 and SB 340 I believe Oregon will be well-positioned to make significant progress to deter organized retail crime ensure safe communities.

Thank you,



Kevin Barton  
District Attorney for Washington County