

# SENATE BILL 598

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CF 0lr2025

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By: **Senators Cassilly and Ready**

Introduced and read first time: January 31, 2020

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Criminal Law – Organized Retail Theft**

3 FOR the purpose of providing that multiple thefts committed by the same person in  
4 multiple counties under one scheme or continuing course of conduct may be  
5 aggregated and prosecuted in a certain county; altering a certain provision relating  
6 to sentencing of a person who has four or more prior theft convictions and is convicted  
7 of theft of property or services with a certain value to prohibit a person who has three  
8 or more prior theft convictions from committing theft of property or services with a  
9 certain value; applying certain penalties; repealing a certain provision of law  
10 prohibiting a court from imposing certain penalties under certain circumstances;  
11 altering a certain reference to the maximum value of certain property or services  
12 applicable to misdemeanor theft; requiring a court to make a finding as to whether  
13 a certain crime is organized retail theft under certain circumstances; providing that  
14 the State has a certain burden of proving that a certain crime is organized retail  
15 theft; requiring that a certain finding become part of the court record for certain  
16 purposes under certain circumstances; making clarifying changes; repealing an  
17 improper reference; defining a certain term; and generally relating to organized  
18 retail theft.

19 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
20 Article – Criminal Law  
21 Section 7–103(f) and 7–104(g)  
22 Annotated Code of Maryland  
23 (2012 Replacement Volume and 2019 Supplement)

24 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
25 Article – Criminal Procedure  
26 Section 2–203  
27 Annotated Code of Maryland  
28 (2018 Replacement Volume and 2019 Supplement)

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 BY adding to  
2 Article – Criminal Procedure  
3 Section 6–235  
4 Annotated Code of Maryland  
5 (2018 Replacement Volume and 2019 Supplement)

6 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
7 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

8 **Article – Criminal Law**

9 7–103.

10 (f) **(1)** When theft is committed in violation of this part under one scheme or  
11 continuing course of conduct, whether from the same or [several sources] **MULTIPLE**  
12 **VICTIMS:**

13 [(1)] **(I)** the conduct may be considered as one crime; and

14 [(2)] **(II)** the value of the property or services may be aggregated in  
15 determining whether the theft is a felony or a misdemeanor.

16 **(2) MULTIPLE THEFTS COMMITTED BY THE SAME PERSON IN**  
17 **MULTIPLE COUNTIES UNDER ONE SCHEME OR CONTINUING COURSE OF CONDUCT**  
18 **MAY BE AGGREGATED AND PROSECUTED IN ANY COUNTY IN WHICH ANY ONE OF THE**  
19 **THEFTS OCCURRED.**

20 7–104.

21 (g) (1) A person convicted of theft of property or services with a value of:

22 (i) at least \$1,500 but less than \$25,000 is guilty of a felony and:

23 1. is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 5 years or a fine  
24 not exceeding \$10,000 or both; and

25 2. shall restore the property taken to the owner or pay the  
26 owner the value of the property or services;

27 (ii) at least \$25,000 but less than \$100,000 is guilty of a felony and:

28 1. is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 10 years or a fine  
29 not exceeding \$15,000 or both; and

30 2. shall restore the property taken to the owner or pay the  
31 owner the value of the property or services; or

1 (iii) \$100,000 or more is guilty of a felony and:

2 1. is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 20 years or a fine  
3 not exceeding \$25,000 or both; and

4 2. shall restore the property taken to the owner or pay the  
5 owner the value of the property or services.

6 (2) Except as provided in paragraph (3) of this subsection, a person  
7 convicted of theft of property or services with a value of at least \$100 but less than \$1,500,  
8 is guilty of a misdemeanor and:

9 (i) is subject to:

10 1. for a first conviction, imprisonment not exceeding 6  
11 months or a fine not exceeding \$500 or both; and

12 2. for a second or subsequent conviction, imprisonment not  
13 exceeding 1 year or a fine not exceeding \$500 or both; and

14 (ii) shall restore the property taken to the owner or pay the owner  
15 the value of the property or services.

16 (3) A person convicted of theft of property or services with a value of less  
17 than \$100 is guilty of a misdemeanor and:

18 (i) is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 90 days or a fine not  
19 exceeding \$500 or both; and

20 (ii) shall restore the property taken to the owner or pay the owner  
21 the value of the property or services.

22 (4) **(I)** [Subject to paragraph (5) of this subsection, a] **A** person who has  
23 [four] **THREE** or more prior convictions under this subtitle [and who is convicted of] **MAY**  
24 **NOT COMMIT** theft of property or services with a value of less than \$1,500 under paragraph  
25 (2) of this subsection.

26 **(II) A PERSON WHO VIOLATES SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS**  
27 **PARAGRAPH** is guilty of a misdemeanor and:

28 [(i)] **1.** is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 5 years or a fine  
29 not exceeding \$5,000 or both; and

30 [(ii)] **2.** shall restore the property taken to the owner or pay the  
31 owner the value of the property or services.

1                    [(5) The court may not impose the penalties under paragraph (4) of this  
 2 subsection unless the State's Attorney serves notice on the defendant or the defendant's  
 3 counsel before the acceptance of a plea of guilty or nolo contendere or at least 15 days before  
 4 trial that:

- 5                    (i) the State will seek the penalties under paragraph (4) of this  
 6 subsection; and  
 7                    (ii) lists the alleged prior convictions.]

8                    **Article – Criminal Procedure**

9                    2–203.

10                    (a) A police officer without a warrant may arrest a person if the police officer has  
 11 probable cause to believe:

12                    (1) that the person has committed a crime listed in subsection (b) of this  
 13 section; and

14                    (2) that unless the person is arrested immediately, the person:

15                    (i) may not be apprehended;

16                    (ii) may cause physical injury or property damage to another; or

17                    (iii) may tamper with, dispose of, or destroy evidence.

18                    (b) The crimes referred to in subsection (a)(1) of this section are:

19                    (1) manslaughter by vehicle or vessel under § 2–209 of the Criminal Law  
 20 Article;

21                    (2) malicious burning under § 6–104 or § 6–105 of the Criminal Law Article  
 22 or an attempt to commit the crime;

23                    (3) malicious mischief under § 6–301 of the Criminal Law Article or an  
 24 attempt to commit the crime;

25                    (4) a theft crime where the value of the property or services stolen is less  
 26 than ~~[\$1,000]~~ **\$1,500** under § 7–104 ~~[or § 7–105]~~ of the Criminal Law Article, **INCLUDING**  
 27 **§ 7–104(G)(4) OF THE CRIMINAL LAW ARTICLE**, or an attempt to commit the crime;

28                    (5) the crime of giving or causing to be given a false alarm of fire under §  
 29 9–604 of the Criminal Law Article;

- 1 (6) indecent exposure under § 11–107 of the Criminal Law Article;
- 2 (7) a crime that relates to controlled dangerous substances under Title 5 of  
3 the Criminal Law Article or an attempt to commit the crime;
- 4 (8) the wearing, carrying, or transporting of a handgun under § 4–203 or §  
5 4–204 of the Criminal Law Article;
- 6 (9) carrying or wearing a concealed weapon under § 4–101 of the Criminal  
7 Law Article;
- 8 (10) prostitution and related crimes under Title 11, Subtitle 3 of the  
9 Criminal Law Article; and
- 10 (11) violation of a condition of pretrial or posttrial release under § 5–213.1  
11 of this article.

12 **6–235.**

13 (A) IN THIS SECTION, “ORGANIZED RETAIL THEFT” MEANS THE  
14 COMMISSION, EITHER ALONE OR WITH ONE OR MORE OTHER PERSONS, OF A SERIES  
15 OF THEFTS OF RETAIL MERCHANDISE FROM ONE OR MORE RETAIL MERCHANTS  
16 WITH THE INTENT TO:

17 (1) RETURN THE MERCHANDISE TO THE MERCHANT FOR VALUE; OR

18 (2) RESELL, TRADE, OR BARTER THE MERCHANDISE FOR VALUE.

19 (B) (1) IF A DEFENDANT IS CONVICTED OF OR RECEIVES A PROBATION  
20 BEFORE JUDGMENT DISPOSITION FOR THEFT UNDER § 7–104 OF THE CRIMINAL  
21 LAW ARTICLE, ON REQUEST OF THE STATE’S ATTORNEY THE COURT SHALL MAKE A  
22 FINDING OF FACT BASED ON EVIDENCE PRODUCED AT TRIAL AS TO WHETHER THE  
23 CRIME IS ORGANIZED RETAIL THEFT.

24 (2) THE STATE HAS THE BURDEN OF PROVING BY A PREPONDERANCE  
25 OF THE EVIDENCE THAT THE CRIME IS ORGANIZED RETAIL THEFT.

26 (C) IF THE COURT FINDS THAT THE CRIME IS ORGANIZED RETAIL THEFT  
27 UNDER SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION, THAT FINDING SHALL BECOME PART OF  
28 THE COURT RECORD FOR PURPOSES OF REPORTING TO THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
29 INFORMATION SYSTEM CENTRAL REPOSITORY UNDER § 10–215 OF THIS ARTICLE.

30 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
31 October 1, 2020.