



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 527**

February Session, 2026

House Bill No. 5563

*House of Representatives, April 8, 2026*

The Committee on Judiciary reported through REP. STAFSTROM of the 129th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

## **AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS CRIMINAL LAW PROPOSALS.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 53-142k of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

3 (a) As used in this section:

4 (1) "Retail property" means any new article, product, commodity,  
5 item or component intended to be sold in retail commerce;

6 (2) "Value" means the retail value of an item as advertised by the  
7 affected retail establishment, including applicable taxes; and

8 (3) "Retail property fence" means a person who buys retail property  
9 when such person knows or should know the property is stolen and  
10 with the intent to unlawfully distribute the property or to promote,  
11 manage, carry on or facilitate a violation of subsection (b) of this section.

12 (b) Any person who, for financial gain and in conjunction with one or

13 more other persons, commits larceny by shoplifting, as defined in  
14 section 53a-119, as amended by this act, of retail property having an  
15 aggregate value exceeding two thousand dollars and (1) wrongfully  
16 takes such property during a period of [one hundred eighty] three  
17 hundred sixty-five days, or (2) sells, delivers or otherwise transfers such  
18 property to a retail property fence, shall have committed the offense of  
19 organized retail theft.

20 (c) Any person who receives, possesses, conceals, stores, barter, sells  
21 or disposes of any retail property acquired in violation of subsection (b)  
22 of this section, including through the use of an online platform, Internet  
23 web site or electronic device, with the intent to distribute the proceeds  
24 or otherwise promote, manage, carry on or facilitate a violation of said  
25 subsection, shall have committed the offense of accessory to organized  
26 retail theft.

27 (d) It shall not be a defense to a charge of accessory to organized retail  
28 theft in violation of subsection (c) of this section that the retail property  
29 was obtained by means other than through a violation of said subsection  
30 if the property was explicitly represented to the person charged under  
31 said subsection (c) as being obtained through the commission of  
32 organized retail theft.

33 (e) Any person who violates subsection (b) or (c) of this section shall  
34 be guilty of a class D felony, except that, if such person derives a  
35 financial benefit of ten thousand dollars or more as a result of such  
36 violation, such person shall be guilty of a class C felony.

37 Sec. 2. Section 53a-119 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
38 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

39 A person commits larceny when, with intent to deprive another of  
40 property or to appropriate the same to [himself] such person or a third  
41 person, [he] such person wrongfully takes, obtains or withholds such  
42 property from an owner. Larceny includes, but is not limited to:

43 (1) Embezzlement. A person commits embezzlement when [he] such

44 person wrongfully appropriates to [himself] such person's self or to  
45 another property of another in [his] such person's care or custody.

46 (2) Obtaining property by false pretenses. A person obtains property  
47 by false pretenses when, by any false token, pretense or device, [he] such  
48 person obtains from another any property, with intent to defraud [him]  
49 such other person or any other person.

50 (3) Obtaining property by false promise. A person obtains property  
51 by false promise when, pursuant to a scheme to defraud, [he] such  
52 person obtains property of another by means of a representation,  
53 express or implied, that [he] such person or a third person will in the  
54 future engage in particular conduct, and when [he] such person does  
55 not intend to engage in such conduct or does not believe that the third  
56 person intends to engage in such conduct. In any prosecution for larceny  
57 based upon a false promise, the defendant's intention or belief that the  
58 promise would not be performed may not be established by or inferred  
59 from the fact alone that such promise was not performed.

60 (4) Acquiring property lost, mislaid or delivered by mistake. A  
61 person who comes into control of property of another that [he] such  
62 person knows to have been lost, mislaid, or delivered under a mistake  
63 as to the nature or amount of the property or the identity of the recipient  
64 is guilty of larceny if, with purpose to deprive the owner thereof, [he]  
65 such person fails to take reasonable measures to restore the property to  
66 a person entitled to it.

67 (5) Extortion. A person obtains property by extortion when [he] an  
68 actor compels or induces another person to deliver such property to  
69 [himself] such actor or a third person by means of instilling in [him] the  
70 other person a fear that, if the property is not so delivered, the actor or  
71 another will: (A) Cause physical injury to some person in the future; or  
72 (B) cause damage to property; or (C) engage in other conduct  
73 constituting a crime; or (D) accuse some person of a crime or cause  
74 criminal charges to be instituted against [him] such person; or (E) expose  
75 a secret or publicize an asserted fact, whether true or false, tending to  
76 subject some person to hatred, contempt or ridicule; or (F) cause a strike,

77 boycott or other collective labor group action injurious to some person's  
78 business; except that such a threat shall not be deemed extortion when  
79 the property is demanded or received for the benefit of the group in  
80 whose interest the actor purports to act; or (G) testify or provide  
81 information or withhold testimony or information with respect to  
82 another's legal claim or defense; or (H) use or abuse [his] the actor's  
83 position as a public servant by performing some act within or related to  
84 [his] the actor's official duties, or by failing or refusing to perform an  
85 official duty, in such manner as to affect some person adversely; or (I)  
86 inflict any other harm which would not benefit the actor.

87 (6) Defrauding of public community. A person is guilty of defrauding  
88 a public community who (A) authorizes, certifies, attests or files a claim  
89 for benefits or reimbursement from a local, state or federal agency which  
90 [he] such person knows is false; or (B) knowingly accepts the benefits  
91 from a claim [he] such person knows is false; or (C) as an officer or agent  
92 of any public community, with intent to prejudice it, appropriates its  
93 property to the use of any person or draws any order upon its treasury  
94 or presents or aids in procuring to be allowed any fraudulent claim  
95 against such community. For purposes of this subdivision such order or  
96 claim shall be deemed to be property.

97 (7) Theft of services. A person is guilty of theft of services when: (A)  
98 With intent to avoid payment for restaurant services rendered, or for  
99 services rendered to [him] such person as a transient guest at a hotel,  
100 motel, inn, tourist cabin, rooming house or comparable establishment,  
101 [he] such person avoids such payment by unjustifiable failure or refusal  
102 to pay, by stealth, or by any misrepresentation of fact which [he] such  
103 person knows to be false; or (B) (i) except as provided in section 13b-38i,  
104 with intent to obtain railroad, subway, bus, air, taxi or any other public  
105 transportation service without payment of the lawful charge therefor or  
106 to avoid payment of the lawful charge for such transportation service  
107 which has been rendered to [him, he] such person who obtains such  
108 service or avoids payment therefor by force, intimidation, stealth,  
109 deception or mechanical tampering, or by unjustifiable failure or refusal  
110 to pay, or (ii) with intent to obtain the use of equipment, including a

111 motor vehicle, without payment of the lawful charge therefor, or to  
112 avoid payment of the lawful charge for such use which has been  
113 permitted [him, he] such person who obtains such use or avoids such  
114 payment therefor by means of any false or fraudulent representation,  
115 fraudulent concealment, false pretense or personation, trick, artifice or  
116 device, including, but not limited to, a false representation as to [his]  
117 such person's name, residence, employment, or driver's license; or (C)  
118 obtaining or having control over labor in the employ of another person,  
119 or of business, commercial or industrial equipment or facilities of  
120 another person, knowing that [he] the actor is not entitled to the use  
121 thereof, and with intent to derive a commercial or other substantial  
122 benefit for [himself] the actor or a third person, [he] the actor uses or  
123 diverts to the use of [himself] such actor or a third person such labor,  
124 equipment or facilities.

125 (8) Receiving stolen property. A person is guilty of larceny by  
126 receiving stolen property if [he] such person receives, retains, or  
127 disposes of stolen property knowing that it has probably been stolen or  
128 believing that it has probably been stolen, unless the property is  
129 received, retained or disposed of with purpose to restore it to the owner.  
130 A person who accepts or receives the use or benefit of a public utility  
131 commodity which customarily passes through a meter, knowing such  
132 commodity (A) has been diverted therefrom, (B) has not been correctly  
133 registered, or (C) has not been registered at all by a meter, is guilty of  
134 larceny by receiving stolen property.

135 (9) Shoplifting. A person is guilty of shoplifting who intentionally  
136 takes possession of any goods, wares or merchandise offered or exposed  
137 for sale by any store or other mercantile establishment with the intention  
138 of converting the same to [his] such person's own use, without paying  
139 the purchase price thereof. A person intentionally concealing  
140 unpurchased goods or merchandise of any store or other mercantile  
141 establishment, either on the premises or outside the premises of such  
142 store, shall be prima facie presumed to have so concealed such article  
143 with the intention of converting the same to [his] such person's own use  
144 without paying the purchase price thereof.

145 (10) Conversion of a motor vehicle. A person is guilty of conversion  
146 of a motor vehicle who, after renting or leasing a motor vehicle under  
147 an agreement in writing which provides for the return of such vehicle  
148 to a particular place at a particular time, fails to return the vehicle to  
149 such place within the time specified, and who thereafter fails to return  
150 such vehicle to the agreed place or to any other place of business of the  
151 lessor within one hundred twenty hours after the lessor shall have sent  
152 a written demand to [him] such person for the return of the vehicle by  
153 registered mail addressed to [him at his] such person at such person's  
154 address as shown in the written agreement or, in the absence of such  
155 address, to [his] such person's last-known address as recorded in the  
156 records of the motor vehicle department of the state in which [he] such  
157 person is licensed to operate a motor vehicle. It shall be a complete  
158 defense to any civil action arising out of or involving the arrest or  
159 detention of any person to whom such demand was sent by registered  
160 mail that [he] such person failed to return the vehicle to any place of  
161 business of the lessor within one hundred twenty hours after the  
162 mailing of such demand.

163 (11) Obtaining property through fraudulent use of an automated  
164 teller machine. A person obtains property through fraudulent use of an  
165 automated teller machine when such person obtains property by  
166 knowingly using in a fraudulent manner an automated teller machine  
167 with intent to deprive another of property or to appropriate the same to  
168 [himself] such person or a third person. In any prosecution for larceny  
169 based upon fraudulent use of an automated teller machine, the crime  
170 shall be deemed to have been committed in the town in which the  
171 machine was located. In any prosecution for larceny based upon more  
172 than one instance of fraudulent use of an automated teller machine, (A)  
173 all such instances in any six-month period may be combined and  
174 charged as one offense, with the value of all property obtained thereby  
175 being accumulated, and (B) the crime shall be deemed to have been  
176 committed in any of the towns in which a machine which was  
177 fraudulently used was located. For the purposes of this subsection,  
178 "automated teller machine" means an unmanned device at which  
179 banking transactions including, without limitation, deposits,

180 withdrawals, advances, payments and transfers may be conducted, and  
181 includes, without limitation, a satellite device and point of sale terminal  
182 as defined in section 36a-2.

183 (12) Library theft. A person is guilty of library theft when (A) [he]  
184 such person conceals on [his person or among his] such person's self or  
185 among such person's belongings a book or other archival library  
186 materials, belonging to, or deposited in, a library facility with the  
187 intention of removing the same from the library facility without  
188 authority or without authority removes a book or other archival library  
189 materials from such library facility, or (B) [he] such person mutilates a  
190 book or other archival library materials belonging to, or deposited in, a  
191 library facility, so as to render it unusable or reduce its value. The term  
192 "book or other archival library materials" includes any book, plate,  
193 picture, photograph, engraving, painting, drawing, map, manuscript,  
194 document, letter, public record, microform, sound recording,  
195 audiovisual material in any format, magnetic or other tape, electronic  
196 data-processing record, artifact or other documentary, written or  
197 printed material regardless of physical form or characteristics, or any  
198 part thereof, belonging to, on loan to, or otherwise in the custody of a  
199 library facility. The term "library facility" includes any public library,  
200 any library of an educational institution, organization or society, any  
201 museum, any repository of public records and any archives.

202 (13) Conversion of leased property. (A) A person is guilty of  
203 conversion of leased personal property who, with the intent of  
204 converting the same to [his] such person's own use or that of a third  
205 person, after renting or leasing such property under an agreement in  
206 writing which provides for the return of such property to a particular  
207 place at a particular time, sells, conveys, conceals or aids in concealing  
208 such property or any part thereof, and who thereafter fails to return such  
209 property to the agreed place or to any other place of business of the  
210 lessor within one hundred ninety-two hours after the lessor shall have  
211 sent a written demand to [him] such person for the return of the  
212 property by registered or certified mail addressed to [him at his] such  
213 person at such person's address as shown in the written agreement,

214 unless a more recent address is known to the lessor. Acknowledgment  
215 of the receipt of such written demand by the lessee shall not be necessary  
216 to establish that one hundred ninety-two hours have passed since such  
217 written demand was sent. (B) Any person, being in possession of  
218 personal property other than wearing apparel, received upon a written  
219 lease, who, with intent to defraud, sells, conveys, conceals or aids in  
220 concealing such property, or any part thereof, shall be prima facie  
221 presumed to have done so with the intention of converting such  
222 property to [his] such person's own use. (C) A person who uses a false  
223 or fictitious name or address in obtaining such leased personal property  
224 shall be prima facie presumed to have obtained such leased personal  
225 property with the intent of converting the same to [his] such person's  
226 own use or that of a third person. (D) "Leased personal property", as  
227 used in this subdivision, means any personal property received  
228 pursuant to a written contract, by which one owning such property, the  
229 lessor, grants to another, the lessee, the right to possess, use and enjoy  
230 such personal property for a specified period of time for a specified sum,  
231 but does not include personal property that is rented or leased pursuant  
232 to chapter 743i.

233 (14) Failure to pay prevailing rate of wages. A person is guilty of  
234 failing to pay the prevailing rate of wages when [he] such person (A)  
235 files a certified payroll, in accordance with section 31-53 which [he] such  
236 person knows is false, in violation of section 53a-157a, and (B) fails to  
237 pay to an employee or to an employee welfare fund the amount attested  
238 to in the certified payroll with the intent to convert such amount to [his]  
239 such person's own use or to the use of a third party.

240 (15) Theft of utility service. A person is guilty of theft of utility service  
241 when [he] such person intentionally obtains electric, gas, water,  
242 telecommunications, wireless radio communications or community  
243 antenna television service that is available only for compensation: (A)  
244 By deception or threat or by false token, slug or other means including,  
245 but not limited to, electronic or mechanical device or unauthorized use  
246 of a confidential identification or authorization code or through  
247 fraudulent statements, to avoid payment for the service by [himself]

248 such person or another person; or (B) by tampering or making  
249 connection with or disconnecting the meter, pipe, cable, conduit,  
250 conductor, attachment or other equipment or by manufacturing,  
251 modifying, altering, programming, reprogramming or possessing any  
252 device, software or equipment or part or component thereof or by  
253 disguising the identity or identification numbers of any device or  
254 equipment utilized by a supplier of electric, gas, water,  
255 telecommunications, wireless radio communications or community  
256 antenna television service, without the consent of such supplier, in order  
257 to avoid payment for the service by [himself] such person or another  
258 person; or (C) with intent to avoid payment by [himself] such person or  
259 another person for a prospective or already rendered service the charge  
260 or compensation for which is measured by a meter or other mechanical  
261 measuring device provided by the supplier of the service, by tampering  
262 with such meter or device or by attempting in any manner to prevent  
263 such meter or device from performing its measuring function, without  
264 the consent of the supplier of the service. There shall be a rebuttable  
265 presumption that the person to whom the service is billed has the intent  
266 to obtain the service and to avoid making payment for the service if,  
267 without the consent of the supplier of the service: (i) Any meter, pipe,  
268 cable, conduit, conductor, attachment or other equipment has been  
269 tampered with or connected or disconnected, (ii) any device, software  
270 or equipment or part or component thereof has been modified, altered,  
271 programmed, reprogrammed or possessed, (iii) the identity or  
272 identification numbers of any device or equipment utilized by the  
273 supplier of the service have been disguised, or (iv) a meter or other  
274 mechanical measuring device provided by the supplier of the service  
275 has been tampered with or prevented from performing its measuring  
276 function. The presumption does not apply if the person to whose service  
277 the condition applies has received such service for less than thirty-one  
278 days or until the service supplier has made at least one meter or service  
279 reading and provided a billing statement to the person as to whose  
280 service the condition applies. The presumption does not apply with  
281 respect to wireless radio communications.

282 (16) Air bag fraud. A person is guilty of air bag fraud when such

283 person, with intent to defraud another person, obtains property from  
284 such other person or a third person by knowingly selling, installing or  
285 reinstalling any object, including any counterfeit air bag or  
286 nonfunctional air bag, as such terms are defined in section 14-106d, in  
287 lieu of an air bag that was designed in accordance with federal safety  
288 requirements as provided in 49 CFR 571.208, as amended, and which is  
289 proper for the make, model and year of the vehicle, as part of the vehicle  
290 inflatable restraint system.

291 (17) Theft of motor fuel. A person is guilty of theft of motor fuel when  
292 such person (A) delivers or causes to be delivered motor fuel, as defined  
293 in section 14-327a, into the fuel tank of a vehicle or into a portable  
294 container, or into both, on the premises of a retail dealer, as defined in  
295 section 14-318, and (B) with the intent to appropriate such motor fuel to  
296 [himself] such person or a third person, leaves such premises without  
297 paying the purchase price for such motor fuel.

298 (18) Failure to repay surplus Citizens' Election Fund grant funds. A  
299 person is guilty of failure to repay surplus Citizens' Election Fund grant  
300 funds when such person fails to return to the Citizens' Election Fund  
301 any surplus funds from a grant made pursuant to sections 9-700 to 9-  
302 716, inclusive, not later than ninety days after the primary or election for  
303 which the grant is made.

304 (19) Fostering the sale of stolen property. A person is guilty of  
305 fostering the sale of stolen property when such person hosts, advertises  
306 or otherwise assists in the sale of stolen property, including through an  
307 online platform, knowing or believing that such property has been  
308 stolen, unless such property is received, retained or disposed of with  
309 purpose to restore such property to the owner.

310 (20) Gift card crime. (A) A person is guilty of gift card crime when,  
311 with intent to defraud, such person (i) acquires or retains possession of  
312 a gift card or gift card redemption information without the consent of  
313 the cardholder, card issuer or gift card seller; (ii) alters or tampers with  
314 a gift card; or (iii) devises a scheme to obtain a gift card or gift card  
315 information from a cardholder, card issuer or gift card seller by means

316 of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations or promises. (B) For  
317 purposes of this subdivision: (i) "Cardholder" means any person or  
318 party (I) to whom a physical or virtual gift card is issued through a  
319 purchase, or (II) who receives a gift card from a willing party; (ii) "card  
320 issuer" means any person who issues a gift card or the agent of such  
321 person with respect to such card; (iii) "closed-loop gift card" means a  
322 card, code or device that is (I) issued to a consumer on a prepaid basis  
323 in a specified amount, regardless of whether such amount may be  
324 increased or reloaded in exchange for payment, and (II) redeemable for  
325 goods, services or anything of value upon presentation by a consumer  
326 to a single merchant or group of affiliated merchants; (iv) "gift card"  
327 means a physical or digital closed-loop gift card or open-loop gift card  
328 that is activated or inactivated; (v) "gift card redemption information"  
329 means information unique to each gift card that allows the cardholder  
330 to access, transfer or spend the funds on such gift card; (vi) "open-loop  
331 gift card" means a card, code or device that is (I) issued to a consumer  
332 on a prepaid basis in a specified amount, regardless of whether such  
333 amount may be increased or reloaded in exchange for payment, and (II)  
334 redeemable for goods, services or anything of value upon presentation  
335 by a consumer to multiple unaffiliated merchants within a payment  
336 card network; and (vii) "gift card seller" means a merchant who is  
337 engaged in the business of selling open-loop gift cards or closed-loop  
338 gift cards to consumers.

339       Sec. 3. Section 52-564a of the general statutes is repealed and the  
340 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

341       (a) Any person eighteen years of age or older or an emancipated  
342 minor who takes possession of goods or merchandise displayed or  
343 offered for sale by any mercantile establishment, or who takes from any  
344 real property any agricultural produce kept, grown or raised on the  
345 property for purposes of sale, without the consent of the owner and with  
346 the intention of converting such goods, merchandise or produce to [his]  
347 such person's own use without having paid the purchase price thereof,  
348 or who alters the price indicia of such goods or merchandise, shall be  
349 liable in a civil action to the owner of the goods, merchandise or produce

350 for (1) the actual and reasonable costs of maintaining the action,  
351 including court costs and a reasonable attorney's fee, (2) the retail value  
352 of the goods, merchandise or produce taken, if not recovered by the time  
353 of the commencement of the action or if recovered in an unmerchantable  
354 condition, and (3) punitive damages in an amount not to exceed [three  
355 hundred] one thousand dollars.

356 (b) A conviction of larceny by shoplifting, as defined in subdivision  
357 (9) of section 53a-119, as amended by this act, shall not be a condition  
358 precedent to the maintenance of a civil action under this section.

359 (c) In any action brought pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, if  
360 the plaintiff does not prevail, the court may award costs and reasonable  
361 attorney's fees to the defendant. [his costs, including a reasonable  
362 attorney's fee, and damages not to exceed three hundred dollars.]

363 (d) No action shall be brought pursuant to subsection (a) of this  
364 section but within two years from the date of the act complained of.

365 Sec. 4. Section 46b-486 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
366 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

367 The Department of Public Health may release information relating to  
368 an acknowledgment of parentage to (1) (A) a signatory of the  
369 acknowledgment, (B) the child if such child is eighteen years of age or  
370 older, (C) a guardian of the person whose parentage is acknowledged,  
371 (D) an attorney representing a person to whom such information may  
372 be released, (E) a court, (F) a federal agency, (G) an authorized  
373 representative of the Department of Social Services, (H) the child  
374 support agency of this state, (I) any agency acting under a cooperative  
375 or purchase of service agreement with the child support agency of this  
376 state, and (J) the child support agency of another state, and (2) an  
377 authorized representative of the Department of Children and Families  
378 when such information is requested in furtherance of the department's  
379 duties or responsibilities in a matter pending the superior court for  
380 juvenile matters where parentage of the child is outstanding.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>October 1, 2026</i>	53-142k
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2026</i>	53a-119
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2026</i>	52-564a
Sec. 4	<i>October 1, 2026</i>	46b-486

**JUD**      *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

**OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:**

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 27 \$	FY 28 \$
Correction, Dept.; Judicial Dept. (Probation)	GF - Potential Cost	Minimal	Minimal
Resources of the General Fund	GF - Potential Revenue Gain	Minimal	Minimal

Note: GF=General Fund

**Municipal Impact:** None

**Explanation**

The bill (1) expands the crime of organized retail theft by lengthening the time period within which a person can trigger the dollar threshold and (2) establishes two new larceny crimes as forms, resulting in a potential cost to the Department of Correction and the Judicial Department for incarceration or probation and a potential revenue gain to the General Fund from fines. On average, the marginal cost to the state for incarcerating an offender for the year is \$3,300<sup>1</sup> while the average marginal cost for supervision in the community is less than \$600<sup>2</sup> each year for adults and \$450 each year for juveniles.

**The Out Years**

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would

<sup>1</sup> Inmate marginal cost is based on increased consumables (e.g., food, clothing, water, sewage, living supplies, etc.) This does not include a change in staffing costs or utility expenses because these expenses would only be realized if a unit or facility opened.

<sup>2</sup> Probation marginal cost is based on services provided by private providers and only includes costs that increase with each additional participant. This does not include a cost for additional supervision by a probation officer unless a new offense is anticipated to result in enough additional offenders to require additional probation officers.

continue into the future subject to the number of offenses and fines collected.

**OLR Bill Analysis****HB 5563*****AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS CRIMINAL LAW PROPOSALS.*****SUMMARY**

This bill expands the crime of organized retail theft by lengthening the time period, from 180 to 365 days, within which a person must reach the crime's \$2,000 threshold. It also specifies that a person is guilty of being an accessory to organized retail theft by using certain online and electronic tools to receive, control, and dispose of the stolen property.

The bill also establishes two new crimes as forms of larceny: (1) fostering the sale of stolen property and (2) gift card crimes, such as altering or tampering with a gift card.

The bill increases the maximum civil liability for punitive damages, from \$300 to \$1,000, for shoplifting certain goods or merchandise from a store or agricultural produce from real property. In cases where the plaintiff loses, the bill eliminates the court's ability to award defendants up to \$300 in damages but continues to allow the court to award them costs and reasonable attorney's fees.

Unrelatedly, the bill adds an authorized Department of Children and Families (DCF) representative to the existing list of people and entities that the Department of Public Health (DPH) may give information to about an acknowledgement of parentage. But the information may only be given when it is requested for work on a matter pending in Superior Court for juvenile matters and the child's parentage is outstanding. By law, DPH keeps a parentage registry of completed acknowledgement of parentage forms. Examples of others to whom the law authorizes release of this information are a court, a federal agency, an authorized representative of the Department of Social Services, or a child support agency.

Lastly, the bill makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

### **ORGANIZED RETAIL THEFT**

Currently, a person commits organized retail theft when, for financial gain, he or she works with at least one other person to shoplift retail property that has an aggregate value of more than \$2,000 and (1) does it within a specified time frame and (2) sells, delivers, or otherwise transfers it to a retail property fence. A fence is a buyer of retail property that he or she knows or should know is stolen with the intent to unlawfully distribute it or to promote, manage, carry on, or facilitate organized retail theft.

The bill lengthens, from 180 to 365 days, the time period within which the person must shoplift the property to be guilty of organized retail theft.

Under existing law, a person is an accessory to organized retail theft if he or she receives, possesses, conceals, stores, barter, sells, or otherwise disposes of the stolen property intending to (1) distribute the proceeds or (2) promote, manage, carry on, or facilitate organized retail theft. The bill specifies this includes doing so through an online platform, Internet website, or electronic device.

By law, organized retail theft and accessory to organized theft are both class D felonies (punishable by up to five years in prison, up to a \$5,000 fine, or both). But if the financial benefit is \$10,000 or more, then it is a class C felony (punishable by up to 10 years in prison, up to a \$10,000 fine, or both).

### **FOSTERING THE SALE OF STOLEN PROPERTY**

The bill establishes the crime of “fostering the sale of stolen property” as a form of larceny (see BACKGROUND). A person is guilty of this new crime when he or she (1) hosts, advertises, or otherwise helps sell stolen property, including through an online platform, and (2) knows or believes that the property was stolen. This crime does not apply if the

property is received, retained, or disposed of in order to give it back to the owner.

### **GIFT CARD CRIME**

The bill establishes “gift card crime” as a new form of larceny (see BACKGROUND). A person is guilty of this crime when, with intent to defraud, the person:

1. acquires or keeps a gift card or gift card redemption information without the consent of the cardholder or the gift card’s issuer or seller;
2. alters or tampers with a gift card; or
3. devises a scheme to get a gift card or gift card information from a cardholder or gift card issuer or seller by false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises.

Under the bill, gift cards are physical or digital, closed-loop or open-loop gift cards that are activated or inactivated. Closed-loop gift cards are cards, codes, or devices on which consumers prepay a specified amount, but can only redeem at the specific merchant or group of affiliated merchants who issued it. Open-loop gift cards are redeemable at multiple unaffiliated merchants within a payment card network (Visa, for example).

### **LIABILITY FOR SHOPLIFTING**

The bill increases the maximum civil liability for punitive damages, from \$300 to \$1,000, for an adult or emancipated minor who shoplifts, without the owner’s consent and with the intent of not paying for them or altering their price, (1) goods or merchandise a store displays or (2) certain agricultural produce.

As under existing law, the person taking the goods or merchandise is also liable for the actual and reasonable costs of (1) maintaining the civil action, including court costs and reasonable attorney’s fees, and (2) the retail value of the goods, merchandise, or produce taken. Additionally,

a larceny criminal conviction is not needed to maintain this civil action, but all actions must be brought within two years of the initial complaint.

The bill also eliminates the court’s ability to award damages of up to \$300 to the defendant if the plaintiff loses. But as under existing law, the court may award the defendant costs and reasonable attorney’s fees.

**BACKGROUND**

***Related Bill***

HB 5268 (File 12), favorably reported by the Committee on Children, also authorizes DPH to release to DCF information about an acknowledgement of parentage.

***Larceny***

By law, the punishment for larceny depends on the value of the property taken, generally ranging from a class C misdemeanor (punishable by up to three months in prison, up to a \$500 fine, or both) when the property value is up to \$500, to a class B felony (punishable by up to 20 years in prison, up to a \$15,000 fine, or both) when the property value exceeds \$20,000 (CGS §§ 53a-122 to -125b).

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable  
Yea 37    Nay 0    (03/24/2026)