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OFFICE OF THE
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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Attorney General James Uthmeier Announces Special Investigative Task Force to Combat Organized Retail Theft



Courtesy of the Office of the Attorney General

JACKSONVILLE, Fla.—Attorney General James Uthmeier today announced that he is convening a Retail Theft Investigative Special Task Force with the purpose of aggressively combatting organized retail theft in Florida.

“Instead of having toothpaste locked behind plexiglass like CA & NY, we are taking decisive action to combat organized retail theft,” **said Attorney General James Uthmeier**. “Shoppers suffer when retail thefts drive up prices. This partnership between law enforcement and the Florida Retail Federation will help keep prices down and put criminals behind bars.”

“Anyone who chooses to commit a crime in Florida will be dealt with swiftly,” **said Statewide Prosecutor Brad McVay**. “The task force will strengthen our ability to get criminals off the street even faster by ensuring seamless coordination among law enforcement partners across the state.”

“The launch of this statewide task force reinforces that Florida stands tall as a law-and-order state,” **said Jacksonville Sheriff T.K. Waters**. “This state and our leadership prioritize protecting law-abiding citizens and promoting a fertile business culture.”

"The Florida Retail Federation is grateful for the bold leadership of Attorney General James Uthmeier and our law enforcement partners in combating organized retail theft," **said R. Scott Shalley, President/CEO, Florida Retail Federation.** "The cross-agency collaboration made possible by this task force not only brings criminals to justice, but also protects Florida businesses, retail team members and consumers."

"The Home Depot is proud to be part of this solution to this growing challenge for communities across the county," **said Michael Tribony, Store Manager, The Home Depot.**

The Retail Theft Investigative Special Task Force equips local law enforcement with statewide tools and resources, removes jurisdictional barriers, and allows investigators to close the cases they open with stronger charges. Collaboration allows for streamlined investigations and eliminates enforcement barriers. The main goal of the task force will be to ensure swift action against organized retail theft rings and repeat offenders.

Last year, Governor DeSantis signed HB 549, which increased the penalties for Organized Retail Theft and made certain repeat offenders eligible for 30 years in prison. Since then, Attorney General Uthmeier's Office of Statewide Prosecution has [dismantled large organized retail theft rings](#) and [secured multiple felony charges](#). Since Attorney General Uthmeier's appointment, 55 defendants have been charged with Organized Retail Theft and Statewide Prosecutors have secured 52 convictions on these charges.

Retail thefts cause massive financial loss to Florida businesses each year. Many business owners and corporations are forced to increase prices as a result, punishing Florida consumers. By enhancing law enforcement coordination with prosecutorial authority, Florida is prioritizing safe communities where businesses can thrive and families can afford groceries.

Attorney General Uthmeier's Office of Statewide Prosecution will begin reaching out to local law enforcement agencies with more information. Interested agencies can sign up at retailtaskforce@myfloridalegal.com

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