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ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL APPLAUDS GENERAL ASSEMBLY PASSAGE OF BILL TO COMBAT THE RISE IN ORGANIZED RETAIL CRIME

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today applauded the Illinois General Assembly's bipartisan passage of legislation to combat the rise in organized retail crime and disrupt the criminal enterprises that engage in and profit from organized retail theft.

Attorney General Raoul initiated House Bill (HB) 1091 to address organized retail crime in partnership with the Illinois Retail Merchants Association (IRMA). The legislation closes gaps in current Illinois law that criminals exploit and provides law enforcement with more tools to address organized retail crimes.

"Organized retail crime is committed by sophisticated criminal enterprises that harm our communities in ways that extend beyond lost revenue and stolen products. These complex operations rely on theft and resale of stolen products to fund and perpetuate the cycle of violence through even more dangerous illegal activities like trafficking drugs and firearms," Raoul said. "House Bill 1091 will give my office and other law enforcement agencies the additional tools needed to continue to disrupt these criminal enterprises and combat the rise in organized retail crime. I appreciate Senator Glowiak Hilton and Representative Kam Buckner's leadership on this matter and the bipartisan support for this effort."

"Organized retail crime threatens our local economies and public safety," Glowiak Hilton said. "HB 1091 gives prosecutors additional resources to hold perpetrators accountable and expands the comprehensive approach to help stop the rise in organized retail crime across the state. I am proud to work with Attorney General Raoul and our other partners on this effort."

"By obstructing these criminal networks at their core, we are going after the individuals who are behind this growing public safety issue," Buckner said. "I would like to thank Attorney General Raoul for his work in making the passage of this proposal today a reality."

"Organized retail crime robs our communities of tax dollars, threatens the safety of employees and customers, and puts our communities at risk of further crime including illegal firearm purchases, human trafficking and terrorism. By passing this measure, Illinois lawmakers are sending a message to criminals that these brazen thefts will not be tolerated and they will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law," Rob Karr, President & CEO of IRMA said. "I want to personally thank Attorney General Raoul for his partnership and tireless work on this issue and offer our appreciation to Sen. Suzy Glowiak Hilton, Sen. John Curran and Rep. Kam Buckner for their leadership as well as every lawmaker who voted in favor of this important measure."

House Bill 1091 creates and, for the first time, specifically defines organized retail crime in state law. Organized retail crime and retail fraud are often mistakenly viewed as being isolated incidents, however, organized crime rings are often behind these acts. Organized criminal enterprises connected to the drug trade, human trafficking and other criminal activities target big box stores, pharmacies, hardware stores, auto dealerships and other retailers to carry out sophisticated theft operations, and these operations cross county and state borders. Enterprises use boosters and mules to coordinate thefts of large amounts of merchandise, which is then resold below market value using online marketplaces in order to fund the enterprise's other illegal activities.

The legislation puts in place stronger oversight of those taking advantage of these online marketplaces and creates a statewide intelligence platform to help retailers and law enforcement agencies better coordinate their enforcement efforts. Additionally, the legislation requires online marketplaces to verify the identity of high-volume sellers. This will help police outlets used to monetize stolen merchandise, which often funds other illicit activities including gun, drug and human trafficking.

The proposal also aims to reduce a criminal's ability to avoid prosecution for organized retail crime. House Bill 1091 would allow any state's attorney where any element of organized retail crime takes place to prosecute the whole crime. Those participating in smash and grab robberies, as well as looting of supply chain vehicles such as trains and cargo trucks, could also be prosecuted for organized retail crime. Additionally, the legislation would provide the Attorney General's office to utilize the statewide grand jury to prosecute organized retail crime. In addition, the legislature appropriated \$5 million to the Attorney General's office to allow the office to award grants to State's attorney's offices and law enforcement agencies that investigate and prosecute organized retail crime.

House Bill 1091 builds on the work of Attorney General Raoul's Organized Retail Crime Task Force. The Organized Retail Crime Task Force is the first statewide, public-private collaboration of its kind in Illinois and is designed to foster cooperation among retailers, online marketplaces, law enforcement agencies and state's attorneys dedicated to targeting organized retail crime enterprises. The task force allows Raoul's office to utilize data and tips provided by retailers and partner across jurisdictions with law enforcement agencies to investigate organized retail crimes and trace thefts to the source. For example, the Organized Retail Crime Task Force, with support from Chicago law enforcement [recovered more than \\$1 million worth of stolen goods](#) from several Chicago-area storage units during December 2021. Raoul's goal in establishing the task force is to continue to improve communication among public and private entities and utilize a multifaceted approach to combatting organized retail theft and related criminal activity.

House Bill 1091 passed the Illinois Senate and House today on bipartisan votes. The legislation will now head to the governor for his approval.