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RE: SB 275

Dear Chair Kropf, Vice-Chair Chotzen, Vice-Chair Wallan, and members of the committee:

I am writing in support of SB 275. This bill provides important tools to address the significant challenges associated with retail theft.

Retail theft is a growing challenge not just for businesses of all sizes, but also for customers and employees in those businesses. I have directly seen the impact of retail theft not only in my role as district attorney, but also as a customer shopping in areas stores. Additionally, retail theft has a negative impact on the communities where it occurs. We often see a connection between retail theft and drug-related or other criminal activity, including violent criminal activity.

The Washington County DA's Office has worked in partnership with area law enforcement agencies and the Organized Retail Crime Association of Oregon (ORCA-OR) to address retail theft challenges through a variety of means. We have received significant positive feedback from the community regarding these efforts. The continued funding and support of these efforts through legislation such as SB 275 is critically important to ensure the economic vitality and safety of communities throughout Oregon.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Barton".

Kevin Barton
District Attorney for Washington County