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Press Release

Law Offices of Palmer, Reifler & Associates Takes Action To Defeat Harmful Maryland House Bill; Maryland Retailers and Consumers Win.

Proposed Maryland House Bill 1239 Called For Repeal Of All Civil Penalty Remedies By Retailers Against Shoplifters And Dishonest Employees.

Orlando, FL, May 4, 2015: On March 4, 2015, Maryland House Bill 1239 was first introduced and read, calling for the repeal of Maryland Statutes Sections 3-1301 through 3-1308 and the subtitle "Subtitle 13. Civil Penalties for Shoplifting and Employee Theft". Two days later, Palmer, Reifler & Associates received this development for review, through its routine daily national search of legal developments, decisions, and opinions regarding any aspect of civil recovery law affecting its clients. Further research concluded that this Bill posed a great threat to the Firm's retail clients and all Maryland retailers. On March 9, 2015, the attorney staff at Palmer, Reifler contacted the Maryland Retailers Association and offered assistance.

Judge Jeffrie Zellmer, VP of Government and Community Affairs, with the Maryland Retailers Association, requested a Palmer, Reifler representative attend the Maryland House Judiciary Committee hearing regarding the House Bill and request an unfavorable committee report. On March 18, Palmer, Reifler attorney, James Welborn, attended the hearing and gave testimony about the use of civil recovery statutes by retailers in Maryland, cited the Maryland Attorney's General Opinion favorably interpreting the statutes, reported as to the hard dollar losses due to theft incurred by retailers in the U.S. and Maryland - citing to specific studies and amounts - and informed the panel of the benefits to Maryland consumers and retailers the statutes allowed for. Thanks to decisive action by the Law Offices of Palmer, Reifler & Associates and the Maryland Retailers Association, House Bill

1239 did not pass. As James Welborn noted, "Retailers, and the law firms representing them, must be ever vigilant as to unfavorable legislation that can affect a retailer's bottom line profit and, together, we must be proactive in preventing such legislation from being passed. Civil Recovery Statutes allow for the recovery of losses due to theft from theft offenders, and not passing the cost of theft on to law abiding consumers." #####

ABOUT

Founded in 1988, the Law Offices of Palmer, Reifler & Associates, P.A. represents retailers in the U.S., Canada and United Kingdom in matters of shoplifting and employee theft. Combined, employee and customer theft (shoplifting) packed a profit-killing punch in excess of \$80 billion for businesses in North America and Europe alone, in 2013. Businesses must sell substantially more to make up these losses. More than 95% of all businesses experience some type of employee theft, which the U.S. Department of Commerce estimates contributes directly to one-third of all bankruptcies in the United States. Consumers ultimately bear the cost of shoplifting and employee theft when businesses are forced to charge more for their goods and services to offset their losses. For example, in the U.S., \$5 of every \$100 a consumer spends in a store compensates for losses due to employee theft and shoplifting. When retailers are forced to close unprofitable stores, or when entire chains are closed, it results in less competition, which means less choice and higher prices for the consumer. This disproportionately affects those who can afford it the least. Globally, according to the *Global Retail Theft Barometer*, retail theft is estimated to cost every family \$186 annually.