



March 26, 2024

Honorable Aisha Wahab
Chair, Senate Committee on Public Safety
1020 N Street, Room 545
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for SB 1242 (Min) – Crimes: Fires

Chair Wahab:

I am writing to express the California Retailers Association's support for Senate Bill 1242, which aims to enhance the sentencing for arson violations purposefully caused to facilitate organized retail theft, specifically by making it a factor in aggravation if the offense occurs within a merchant's premises.

This bill highlights the heightened severity and potential harm caused by arson, especially when targeted at businesses and within their premises. Such acts of arson not only endanger lives but also disrupt store operations and further undermine community safety. When fires are lit inside stores, they often must close for weeks to replace products damaged due to fire, smoke, or water damage.

The California Retailers Association is the only statewide trade association representing all segments of the retail industry including general merchandise, department stores, mass merchandisers, on-line marketplaces, restaurants, convenience stores, supermarkets and grocery stores, retail pharmacies, and specialty retail such as auto, vision, jewelry, hardware, and home stores.

SB 1242, paired with a package of other measures introduced in the state legislature, will keep our employees, our customers and the neighborhoods retailers operate in safe from this criminal activity.

We ask the Senate Committee on Public Safety to pass SB 1242.

Sincerely,

Ryan Allain
Director, Government Affairs
California Retailers Association

cc: Heather Caden, Office of Senator Min
Eric Dang, Policy Office of President pro Tempore Mike McGuire