

April 3, 2025

The Honorable Pilar Schiavo  
California State Assemblymember  
1021 O Street, Suite 4140  
Sacramento, CA 95814



**RE: AB 949 (Schiavo) -- SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Schiavo:

On behalf of the California Retailers Association, I am writing in strong support of your AB 949, a crucial bill that will help small and independent businesses across California. This legislation provides grants to help deter retail theft and reduce “smash and grab” robberies.

In August, the Governor, legislative leadership, the California Highway Patrol, and the California Retailers Association collaborated on a multi-bill legislative package aimed at addressing retail theft. We believe this legislative bill package provides substantial help to the retail industry, however, small and independent retailers continue to face financial barriers in implementing anti-theft measures and security systems necessary to deter criminal activity.

Small and independent businesses face significant challenges, including violence, assaults, battery, and even shootings. In response to this, Cal/OSHA is currently drafting regulations to combat workplace violence that could stem from retail theft incidents, which are likely to come with additional costs for the retailers. As shopkeepers in a consumer facing industry, small and independent retailers are often the first to experience both the financial and physical repercussions of broader societal instability.

The California Retailers Association is the only statewide trade association representing all segments of the retail industry including general merchandise, department stores, mass merchandisers, convenience stores, supermarkets and grocery stores, chain drug, and specialty retail such as auto, vision, jewelry, hardware and home stores. The California Retailers Association works on behalf of California’s retail industry, which currently operates over 164,200 stores with sales in excess of \$571 billion annually and employing 2,776,000 people—nearly one fifth of California’s total employment.

Ensuring access to state funding and grant opportunities, particularly for small and independent businesses that may not always have immediate awareness of available resources, is key to supporting California’s retail sector. These grants are essential in enabling small retailers to strengthen security, minimize financial losses, and build resilience against criminal activity.

Thank you for taking the time to introduce legislation to address this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Ryan Allain  
Director, Government Affairs  
California Retailers Association