



# City of Whittier

13230 Penn Street, Whittier, California 90602-1772  
(562) 567-9999 [www.cityofwhittier.org](http://www.cityofwhittier.org)

April 29, 2024

Joe Vinatieri  
Mayor

The Honorable Kevin McCarty  
Chair, Assembly Public Safety Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 111  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Cathy Warner  
Mayor Pro Tem

Octavio Martinez  
Council Member

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

Fernando Dutra  
Council Member

**RE: Retail Theft Enforcement and Increased Penalties Legislation:  
AB 1960, AB 1990, AB 2438, AB 2814, AB 3209, SB 1242 and AB 2943**

Mary Ann Pacheco  
Council Member

Dear Assembly Member McCarty and Senator Wahab:

Brian Saeki  
City Manager

One of the City of Whittier's strategic goals is to enhance public safety, so our City is pleased that the Assembly Public Safety Committee will be hearing a slate of bills to address the growing problem of retail theft in our state. As such, the City of Whittier would like to express its support for AB 1960, AB 1990, AB 2438, AB 2814, AB 3209, SB 1242 and AB 2943, bills that we believe would help to address the issue of providing critically needed tools of enforcement to combat retail theft.

Retail theft continues to be a problem in nearly all California communities. In fact, according to the Public Policy Institute of California, commercial burglary increased statewide since 2020, especially in larger counties with an increase of 13% among 14 of the 15 largest counties. However, between 2022 and 2023, the City of Whittier experienced a 43% increase in commercial burglaries and an 11% increase in shoplifting. The City of Whittier prides itself on being one of the most business-friendly cities in California and strives to provide an economic environment in which small and large businesses alike can flourish. However, crime is on the rise, and our police department's hands are tied on the matter of enforcement, which provides an environment where criminals and thieves face little to no repercussions for their crimes. For these reasons, City of Whittier officials and the Whittier Police Department need additional tools to reduce crime and improve the safety of our neighborhoods.

There are reforms needed to ensure that both apprehension rates of offenders improve and that those apprehended for more serious theft offenses meet meaningful consequences.

Page Two  
The Honorable Kevin McCarty  
The Honorable Aisha Wahab  
April 29, 2024

Specifically, there are several bills that would address these necessary reforms through increasing the certainty and severity of apprehension for retail theft offenses. The proposed legislation proposes several methods of increasing enforcement tools on the front end of our criminal justice system and increasing the penalties on the back end. These methods range from increasing ongoing funding of local and statewide enforcement programs, improving law enforcements' powers and arrest authority, creating new offenses, and adding sentencing enhancements for felonious offenses of retail theft.

While these individual bills are important to continuing to make progress on retail theft, these bills are only one part of a comprehensive solution that needs to include prevention, enforcement, and supervision. Addressing enforcement tools and increased penalties are some of the methods that can help solve this growing problem; however, additional changes are needed in order to make our communities safer.

Sincerely,



Joe Vinatieri  
Mayor

c: Senator Bob Archuleta  
Assembly Member Marc Berman  
Assembly Member Wendy Carrillo  
Assembly Member Evan Low  
Senator Dave Min  
Assembly Member Cottie Petrie-Norris  
Assembly Member Esmeralda Soria  
Assembly Member Lisa Calderon  
Whittier City Council  
Kristine Guerrero, League of California Cities  
League of California Cities