



**David W. Sunday, Jr.**  
Pennsylvania Attorney General

## **Attorney General Sunday: After One Year, Organized Retail Crime Unit is Combatting Violent Thieves**

*Since its launch, the unit has arrested dozens of thieves, recovered millions of dollars in stolen goods*

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NORRISTOWN — Attorney General Dave Sunday joined Philadelphia-area law enforcement and community partners to discuss Year One achievements of the Office of Attorney General’s Organized Retail Crime Unit, and how collaboration is resulting in arrests, prosecutions, and recoveries of stolen goods.

The Organized Retail Crime Unit launched on July 1, 2024, following Act 42 (of 2023) and a new criminal statute that made retail theft of goods over \$50,000 a first-degree felony.

In its first year, the unit opened more than 65 investigations, charged more than 40 alleged thieves, and recovered nearly \$2 million in stolen goods.

The Organized Retail Crime Unit responds to high-dollar thefts, typically perpetrated by multiple thieves who manipulate gift cards and store return/exchange policies — or, in many cases, enter retail stores in packs and steal as many items as they can as quickly as possible.

“This unit is aggressively pursuing thieves who operate in packs, oftentimes terrorizing purely innocent store employees and shoppers,” Attorney General Sunday said. “The perception that retail theft is a petty crime is outdated, as these crimes are violent in nature and designed to menace and frighten bystanders. With the help of our partners, we have made big strides in stopping these criminal enterprises, and sending a strong message to anyone thinking of committing these crimes.”

The Pennsylvania legislature took action as law enforcement noticed a trend in violent, pack-style thefts at stores — typically high-end retailers or stores with expensive items, like smart phones and other electronics, small appliances, or luxury brand clothing.

Attorney General Sunday hosted a media event this week in Montgomery County, as many thefts occur in the Philadelphia area, home to many retail stores and high traffic areas.

**Pennsylvania Senator Dave Argall said:**

“As the prime sponsor of the legislation which created the Organized Retail Crime Unit, I’m pleased to see how effectively this unit has pursued and stopped criminal organizations across Pennsylvania. Theft at the scale we see in these cases does not just hurt employers – it results in the loss of jobs and makes our communities less safe.”

**Alex Baloga, President/CEO of Pa. Food Merchants Association, said:**

“We could not be more proud of the work we have done together. For a long time, it felt like businesses were fighting losing battles alone. This [media] event does not signal a let up of our efforts.”

**Philadelphia Police Department Deputy Commissioner Frank Vanore** noted that retail theft is down 13 percent in Philadelphia and the arrest rate in the city is up 40 percent. He said:

“We knew we had prolific offenders that we had to get off the street. We want to thank the Attorney General and all the retail partners and law enforcement partners. It is working in Philadelphia.”

**Pennsylvania State Police Sergeant Logan Brouse said:**

“Theft schemes have become more sophisticated, and losses to stores have become greater. We all pay the price, from higher-priced goods to lower-paying retail jobs. The Pennsylvania State Police and the Organized Retail Crime Unit stand united in our commitment to justice and the protection of our communities. Together, we will ensure that organized retail thieves are identified, apprehended, and held accountable.”

**Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele said:**

“These organized retail theft groups are sophisticated, coordinated and causing significant financial losses to major retailers, who then pass the cost on to consumers in higher prices. We have worked hard to aggressively investigate these groups with our local and state partners, to not only arrest the low-level operatives in the store, but to also work our way up to the leaders and the fences. I want to thank Attorney General Sunday for his partnership on this issue.”

The OAG’s Organized Retail Crime Unit is staffed with ten agents and five attorneys who work across the Commonwealth.

Here are some examples of the unit’s achievements in Year One:

Thieves [use stolen credit cards](#) to buy more than \$100,000 from Lowe's stores in several counties

Philadelphia-based [5th Street Crew](#) targets high-end retailers in blitz-style thefts

[FedEx employees charged](#) with engineering \$173K stolen cellphone scheme

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