



Placer and Sacramento County Leaders, Prosecutors, and Businesses Hold Forum on Retail Theft and Proposition 36

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Sacramento, CA – Placer County District Attorney Morgan Gire, Sacramento County District Attorney Thien Ho, and Californians Against Retail and Residential Theft (CARRT), joined by law enforcement and business leaders, held a forum today examining retail theft and the impact of Proposition 36 nearly one year after its implementation.

The event brought together dozens of business owners, prosecutors, law enforcement officials, and community representatives to discuss how Proposition 36 is reshaping California's public safety landscape.

Proposition 36 represents a significant shift in the criminal justice system, restoring accountability for repeat offenders while expanding pathways to rehabilitation.

Sacramento County District Attorney Thien Ho emphasized the need to rebuild community safety. "We are not simply reacting to retail theft — we are working to protect and restore our businesses and neighborhoods. Proposition 36 has started to balance our criminal justice system, and we will continue implementing it in a fair, accountable and effective way to ensure our communities are healthy and safe."

Participants highlighted how Proposition 36 provides new tools to address chronic theft and related crimes, while also investing in rehabilitation programs targeting root causes such as fentanyl addiction, homelessness, and substance use disorders.

Placer County District Attorney Morgan Gire noted the increased ability to identify and disrupt organized theft networks, "Through data analysis, Proposition 36, and unprecedented collaboration, we are identifying organized retail theft rings faster, holding repeat offenders accountable, taking down statewide operations, and keeping our communities safe. This initiative is another example of why our small but mighty county remains at the forefront of statewide public-safety issues."

Proposition 36 makes certain low-level theft and drug-possession offenses felonies when offenders have prior convictions. For theft crimes, even petty theft under \$950 can be charged as a felony for individuals with prior theft-related convictions, and prosecutors may aggregate multiple incidents to meet felony thresholds. The measure also creates a new category of treatment-mandated felonies requiring drug treatment; individuals who fail to complete treatment may face up to three years in state prison.

Local business leaders also voiced support. “We are a proud advocate for Proposition 36, and we are already seeing its positive impact in the Sacramento region,” said Michael Ault of the Downtown Partnership. “We are committed to ensuring the law is fully and effectively implemented. The safety of employees, residents, and visitors is vital and will always be the top priority of Sacramento’s business community.”

Over the past decade, shoplifting has increased more than 35 percent statewide. In response, California voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition 36, a landmark measure supported in all 58 counties, that closes loopholes left by Proposition 47. The law restores accountability for habitual offenders while expanding treatment opportunities aimed at breaking cycles of crime and addiction.

Early statewide data from the California District Attorneys Association (CDAA) is promising: prosecutors are filing between 1,200 and 1,400 Proposition 36 cases each month. More than 75 percent of defendants have prior felony convictions, and nearly one-third have prior serious or violent felonies.

Despite these positive trends, the state has yet to fully fund Proposition 36, leaving local governments and law enforcement to implement the law without adequate resources to expand the treatment and rehabilitation programs envisioned by voters.

Matt Ross of CARRT underscored the growing deterrent effect, “Businesses and employees are reporting that Prop 36 is acting as a deterrent – with would-be thieves increasingly worried about prison time. The next step is for state leaders to fully fund accountable treatment programs so we can deliver on the will of the voters.”

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