

330 West Broadway
San Diego, CA 92101
(619) 531-4040
SanDiegoDA.com



DWAIN D. WOODLEY
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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Contact: [Steve Walker](#) (619) 531-3890
[Tanva Sierra](#) (619) 531-3315
En Español [Barbara Medina](#) (619) 531-3305

DA, Downtown Partnership Join Forces to Deter Retail Theft, Support Businesses

San Diego Organized Retail Crime Alliance, DA Providing Free Window Signage That Warns Would-Be Thieves

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) joined forces with the Downtown San Diego Partnership and the San Diego Police Department today to educate businesses that the new laws under Proposition 36 passed by the People are providing accountability alongside treatment, and to encourage reporting of crimes to law enforcement.

To support the effective implementation of the new laws, businesses are being informed that free window signage courtesy of the San Diego Organized Retail Crime Alliance and the DA is available that warns those who would commit retail theft that they will be prosecuted, especially repeat offenders who chronically target businesses and threaten public safety. One year after Proposition 36 went into effect, DA Stephan also provided an update on prosecutions under the new law.

“Prop 36 has made a real difference to local businesses and prosecuting these habitual offenders is making stores and the community safer—across the county and in Downtown San Diego,” DA Stephan said. “Since the new law went into effect, business owners have been able to call police to stop repeat thieves from terrorizing their employees and customers. By emphasizing accountability alongside treatment and rehabilitation, data also shows that Prop 36 is working to address the core drivers of habitual criminal behavior.”

Data released last month shows that as of November 11, 2025, 2,721 cases have been charged with one of the two key portions of Prop 36: repeat theft offenders charged under Penal Code section 666.1 and repeat hard drug offenders charged under Health and Safety Code section 11395. About 65 percent of the cases fall under drug charges, while about 35 percent pertain to retail theft.

In about 98 percent of those cases, the court has placed defendants on a treatment track to address their addiction or other underlying causes of crime.

DA Stephan was joined at a news conference today by San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria, San Diego Police Captain Ryan Hallahan and Alonso Vivas, the Downtown San Diego Partnership’s

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Senior Vice President and Executive Director of its Clean and Safe program, to provide an update on Prop 36 prosecutions, explain how police are responding to calls for service when thefts occur, and highlight the support the Downtown Partnership provides to businesses in the City's urban core.

Over the past 12 months, local small and large businesses have expressed relief over the implementation of the repeat theft offender provisions of Prop 36, with some reporting that stricter penalties are deterring theft and providing a sense of security for businesses previously targeted by recurring offenders.

"For the first time in years, Downtown businesses, residents, and visitors feel like the system is working with them instead of against them," Vivas said. "Since Prop 36 took effect, we're hearing from shops that they are finally seeing real relief from retail theft and fewer repeat offenders walking back through their doors."

San Diego Police Department statistics for 2025 show there's been a 23 percent decrease in the downtown San Diego area for theft, robbery, burglary/breaking and entering, larceny, and other property crimes. In 2024, there were 3,515 such crimes and this year there have been 2,708.

"SDPD's efforts in downtown are about protecting our community from criminal behavior that threatens safety, commerce, and quality of life," said SDPD Captain Ryan Hallahan. "Prop 36 provides us with the ability to enforce specific narcotic and theft violations as a felony, hold people accountable for criminal acts, and provide treatment for those battling addiction. It's encouraging to see the statistics showing positive results for our downtown businesses, and our teams will continue working to keep it that way."

"Proposition 36 is delivering results for San Diego," Mayor Gloria said. "Downtown is seeing fewer property crimes, and we're bringing accountability back for repeat offenders while still offering treatment and services for those struggling with addiction. Retail theft hurts everyone – small business owners, workers, and customers. I urge San Diegans to report these crimes when they happen. Every report helps us hold offenders accountable and keep our city safe for all of us."

"A year after voters resoundingly approved Prop 36, we're seeing its promise delivered," said San Diego City Councilmember Stephen Whitburn, who represents downtown. "District Attorney Stephan and our law enforcement officers are holding repeat offenders accountable, and that's critical for protecting downtown residents and businesses. This coordinated effort is renewing confidence for my constituents who live and work downtown."

At today's news conference, businesses were reminded that they can take proactive steps to maximize the impact of Prop 36, including:

- Reporting crimes and educating employees on aspects of the new laws.
- Investing in surveillance to better document crimes and training employees on how to document evidence and losses suffered.
- Engaging with law enforcement to collaborate and stay informed about solutions available under the new law.



Business owners and the public should report theft, share information, and support efforts to hold offenders accountable to promote public safety and maintain a thriving community.

In addition, businesses were reminded today that free window cling stickers are available that warn would-be thieves they will be prosecuted. To request a free window cling theft warning, businesses can email SanDiegoDA@sdcdca.org

Recognizing an increase in organized retail theft, several years ago the DA's Office formed a specialized team of prosecutors and investigators to fight this crime. The team works with local businesses and law enforcement to build sound evidence, which ultimately leads to stronger cases. In addition to engaging the Downtown San Diego

Partnership and Chambers of Commerce across the county, the DA's Office also participates in the San Diego Organized Retail Crime Alliance, (SDORCA) bridging the gap between public and private investigations of organized retail theft in both large and small businesses in the county.

Proposition 36, which passed with 68 percent of the vote in 2024, took effect in December of last year. The DA's Office has been committed to successfully implementing the transformational proposition in partnership with the Sheriff, the county's police chiefs, the court and the community. The measure:

- Provides stricter consequences for repeat theft offenders, those who are committing smash and grab retail crimes, and organized theft rings, to help stop the cycle of recidivism.
- Requires convicted dealers of fentanyl and hard drugs to receive a warning that the next time they sell illegal drugs, and someone dies, they will be held responsible for a victim's death. The law provides additional consequences for illegal drug dealers who cause great bodily injury or death, who carry firearms while dealing narcotics, or are involved in the distribution of unusually large quantities of narcotics.
- Incentivizes lifesaving treatment for defendants suffering from addiction by creating the new *Treatment Mandated Felony* that offers treatment as an alternative to incarceration for those who illegally possess hard drugs like fentanyl and methamphetamine, addressing the root cause of many crimes.

More information about the implementation of Prop 36 can be found on the [DA's website here.](#)

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About the San Diego County District Attorney's Office

The San Diego County DA's Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.

About the Downtown San Diego Partnership

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The Downtown San Diego Partnership is a nonprofit organization that serves as the principal voice and driving force behind the economic prosperity and cultural vitality of Downtown San Diego. It also serves as the managing organization for several special districts including the Property and Business Improvement District, otherwise known as the Clean & Safe program, that provides essential public services in the 275 blocks of Downtown. The organization's nearly 300 members, representing a variety of business sectors including real estate, technology, banking, law, defense, insurance, communications, energy, and tourism are committed to nurturing a Downtown that benefits the entire San Diego region.

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