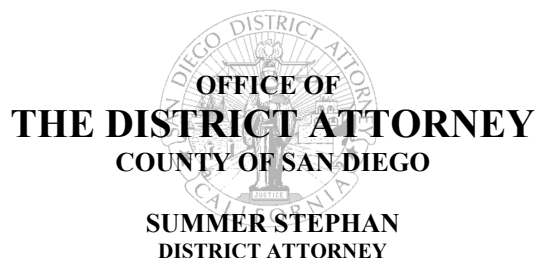


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DA Stephan Testifies Before U.S. Senate on National Threat of Organized Retail Crime and Transnational Criminal Theft Networks

DA Urges Passage of the Combatting Organized Retail Crime Act

San Diego County District Attorney and President of the National District Attorneys Association (NDAA) [Summer Stephan](#) testified today before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, urging swift Congressional action to combat the growing threat of organized retail crime (ORC) and transnational theft networks that are harming communities and businesses across the nation with commercial and residential thefts and burglaries. DA Stephan was called to testify as the voice for America's prosecutors in her role as President/Chair of the National District Attorneys Association and for her expertise in combatting these organized crimes in San Diego County.

In her testimony, DA Stephan outlined the evolution of organized theft from isolated incidents into sophisticated, multi-state and international criminal enterprises responsible for billions in losses and threats to public safety. Drawing from her office's successful prosecutions in San Diego County, Stephan emphasized that these crimes are far from victimless and require a coordinated, national response. DA Stephan brought the experience of the many victims such as employees of small and large businesses, and homeowners victimized by these sophisticated and at times violent criminal rings.

[Watch a recording of the hearing here.](#)

"Organized retail crime is not only eroding business and job stability but is also threatening the safety and well-being of our communities," said DA Stephan. "From high-end smash-and-grabs to international burglary rings, we're seeing an increase in violence and criminal sophistication that demands strong legislative and enforcement action."

Stephan detailed her office's proactive strategies in San Diego, including forming specialized teams to prosecute ORC, collaborating with the California Highway Patrol, and establishing partnerships through the Organized Retail Crime Alliance. Stephan emphasized the success of recent legislation in California which allows prosecutors to aggregate thefts and pursue more serious charges. At the national level, the NDAA has joined with the Retail Industry Leaders Association to launch initiatives like store walks and the Vibrant Communities Initiative, aimed

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at improving coordination and safety in retail environments. The DA also partnered with the U.S. Chamber and National Retail Federation to educate about effective prevention and prosecution.

Stephan called on Congress to pass the Combatting Organized Retail Crime Act of 2025 (CORCA), which would establish a federal Organized Retail Crime Coordination Center to enhance national collaboration among prosecutors, law enforcement, and private sector stakeholders. She also called for enforcement of the INFORM Act that requires identification of third-party sellers to expose stolen property online. Finally, DA Stephan stressed the importance of balanced prosecution strategies that differentiate between a young person who makes a mistake from a habitual criminal who preys on small businesses and neighborhoods. She advocated for the coordination center to link the dots to combat the organized crime and transnational criminal organizations that harm our nation.

In San Diego, the DA's Office has prosecuted over 218 ORC defendants over the past two years, in partnership with law enforcement and retailers, involving theft losses of more than \$2.6 million. Cases include multi-defendant smash-and-grab operations, repeat theft rings targeting national retailers, and transnational criminal networks responsible for multi-state burglaries and multi-million-dollar jewelry heists.

"Our experience shows that smart laws, real consequences, and close collaboration across jurisdictions work," Stephan stated. "Now we need Congress to scale these efforts nationally so that no community is left vulnerable."

Stephan also stressed the need for public-private partnerships to extend beyond enforcement and into prevention and education. She called for a national public awareness campaign to inform consumers about the impact of buying stolen goods, particularly through online marketplaces and informal venues like swap meets.

DA Stephan argued that just as robust laws and strategic prosecution are essential, so too is the active participation of consumers and community members in curbing organized retail theft. By combining legal tools, law enforcement coordination, and informed public engagement, Stephan concluded, communities can reclaim safety and economic vitality from the grip of organized crime.

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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.

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