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CONTACT:

Courtney Whetstone

SVP of Communications and Marketing

614-228-4201

cwhetstone@ohiochamber.com

With Violent Crime and Retail Theft on the Rise, Ohio Chamber Rolls out Crime Task Force

COLUMBUS, OHIO – The Ohio Chamber of Commerce recently rolled out its newly-created Crime Task Force, pulling together representatives from the retail community, along with state and county law enforcement officials, in an organizational meeting. The body will meet over the coming months to examine retail theft and other incidents of crime across Ohio that can throttle commercial growth.

“The safety of our communities remains fundamental to our state’s ability to attract and retain businesses and that makes it a priority for the Ohio Chamber,” Ohio Chamber CEO Steve Stivers said. “The State of Ohio has made it clear that the issue of public safety is a priority, making over \$100 million in grants available to local law enforcement; however, there is still more work to be done.”

This new task force was formed on the heels of an October 2022 study commissioned by the Ohio Chamber, where 62% of businesses surveyed responded that rising crime is keeping businesses from expanding. The task force is being led by former U.S. Attorney David DeVillers of Barnes & Thornburg LLC and retired Judge Scott VanDerKarr and the committee is made up of members from the Ohio Attorney General’s office, representatives from corporations, as well as Prosecutors Julia Bates and Missy Powers.

“I look forward to working with this knowledgeable group to provide input on improving safety and lowering crime for businesses in Ohio,” DeVillers said. “It is what I have done the vast majority of my career and I believe this task force will come up with commonsense policy recommendations that will make a positive impact for the State of Ohio.”

The goal of the committee is to affect new legislation to discuss criminal justice reforms, prosecutorial authority and new or enhanced penalties to produce recommendations for the Ohio General Assembly. In the inaugural meeting a number of issues were discussed including cross jurisdiction prosecution, aggregation of multiple thefts and the use of R.I.C.O. laws.

The Ohio Chamber is the state's leading business advocate and represents thousands of companies that do business in Ohio. Our mission is to aggressively champion free enterprise, economic competitiveness and growth for the benefit of all Ohioans.

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