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*COLUMBUS, OHIO – The below statement can be attributed to Ohio Chamber President & CEO Steve Stivers regarding **Fight Retail Crime Day**, designated by the National Retail Federation as October 26.*

“Crime, particularly organized retail theft, continues to plague our state and country and jeopardize Ohio’s business climate. Our September 2022 survey of Ohioans and business owners revealed that 62% of Ohio businesses agree that rising crime has kept businesses from expanding, thus slowing the creation of new jobs and economic opportunity for all Ohioans.

“This past May, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce created a Crime Task Force to focus on the issues and responses raised in the September 2022 survey and discuss possible solutions to help increase the growth and security of Ohio businesses. Led by former U.S. Attorney David DeVillers of Barnes & Thornburg LLC and retired Judge Scott VanDerKarr, our Crime Task Force pulled together representatives of the retail community along with state and county law enforcement officials in several meetings throughout the summer and fall. The group examined retail theft and other crimes across Ohio that are throttling commercial growth, and has developed statutory recommendations surrounding criminal justice reforms, prosecutorial authority, and new or enhanced penalties.

“Today, on **Fight Retail Crime Day**, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce stands with consumers, retailers, workers, and the communities they serve to advocate for effective solutions in combating organized retail theft. We look forward to collaborating with our retail partners, law enforcement, and members of the Ohio General Assembly to elevate this conversation in Ohio and tackle organized retail theft in a meaningful and comprehensive manner.”

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