

LEGISLATIVE RESOURCE SHEET | 2018 SESSION

Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association

ISSUE/LEGISLATION:

ENHANCED PENALTIES FOR REPEAT SHOPLIFTING OFFENDERS

The MCPA supports increasing the charge or severity for repeat shoplifters.

PROPOSAL STATUS

MCPA will actively support this proposal as part of its 2018 Legislative Agenda

BACKGROUND

Shoplifting is a crime which seems to continually increase each year and one that consumes a lot of police resources and court time, usually with little accountability for the suspect. Persons who habitually steal know the theft statute and the value of the items they steal and take proactive steps in order to stay within a misdemeanor violation. In 2016, West St. Paul made a shoplifting arrest of an individual who had 123 open/prior cases on his records, but the theft statute would only allow a misdemeanor charge.

Like other statutes, the theft statute should have enhancements based on a person's prior conviction record within specific time periods. It should be noted most persons arrested for theft get several "breaks" before being convicted. There are restorative justice programs and other alternatives to divert a person from the court system, thus by the time a person has a theft conviction on their record, they usually have already committed theft a number of times.

Support of this legislative proposal would lead to increased offender accountability, more efficient and appropriate use of court time and help retailers curb the increasing number of thefts.