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Combating Retail Crime for Safer Communities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Addressing Addiction, Homelessness, and Mental Health: Retailers and Prosecutors Launch Groundbreaking Initiative

RILA and NDAA Collaborate on Vibrant Communities Initiative

Arlington, VA – Over 100 district attorneys and retail asset protection leaders from across the country convened at the retail industry’s annual [Asset Protection Conference](#) in Denver, CO today to address the issue of rising crime and violence impacting retailers and local communities. At the conclusion of the 2nd Annual Retail Theft Workshop, the **Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA) and National District Attorneys Association (NDAA) unveiled an innovative pilot project to address root drivers of habitual theft, violence, and other unlawful activity in and around retail establishments — mental health issues, substance use, homelessness, and other complex societal challenges.**

The newly-launched **Vibrant Communities Initiative** will see retailers collaborate with key stakeholders — including district attorneys, police departments, social service organizations, local policymakers, civic and business groups, and others — to tackle systemic social challenges, enhance information sharing, prosecute habitual and violent offenders, propose meaningful second chance opportunities to reduce recidivism and explore cutting edge technology solutions that prevent retail crime and deter violence against employees. Successful solutions piloted in select communities will ultimately serve as models for broader implementation across the country.

“The damaging effect of retail crime and violence goes well beyond economic harm to retailers—it impacts lives and livelihoods and threatens the vibrancy of entire communities. This isn’t a problem that manifested itself overnight, but there is no denying that the pandemic significantly exacerbated the problem,” said **RILA Senior Executive Vice President Lisa LaBruno**. “The goal of this partnership is to go beyond identifying the problem; our plan is to embed a cross-functional group of private and public sector leaders in the community and test solutions that tackle the root causes of retail crime. We’ve made tremendous progress in just the last year since we announced our partnership with NDAA, and we are optimistic that expanding the scope of our partnership in this way can make a difference in every community across America.”

“There is no easy solution to tackle theft and violence; we’re facing a complex, multi-faceted challenge and it’s going to take commitments from a diverse group of stakeholders to better understand the root causes in various communities and implement solutions that acknowledge and address those larger issues,” remarked **NDAA Executive Director Nelson Bunn**. “We aim to reduce crime and reduce recidivism, yes; but ultimately we want this work to be reflected in healthier, more vibrant communities in which everyone feels safe.”

“Retail theft is becoming increasingly sophisticated and increasingly violent. Organized theft and habitual offenders are putting our communities at risk, and our response must be equally comprehensive. The Vibrant Communities Initiative is an opportunity to take a more holistic approach to address the systemic social challenges fueling the growth in retail crime, with the goal of enhancing overall community safety,” said **Erie County District Attorney John J. Flynn, President of the National District Attorneys Association.**

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RILA is the US trade association for leading retailers. We convene decision-makers, advocate for the industry, and promote operational excellence and innovation. Our aim is to elevate a dynamic industry by transforming the environment in which retailers operate.

RILA members include more than 200 retailers, product manufacturers, and service suppliers, which together account for more than \$2.7 trillion in annual sales, millions of American jobs, and hundreds of thousands of stores, manufacturing facilities, and distribution centers domestically and abroad.

Formed in 1950, NDAA is the oldest and largest national organization representing state and local prosecutors in the country. With more than 5,500 members representing over two-thirds of the state and local prosecutors' offices, NDAA is recognized as the leading source of national expertise on the prosecution function and is a valuable resource for the media, academia, government, and community leaders. NDAA's mission is to provide state and local prosecutors with the knowledge, skills, and support they need to ensure that justice is done and that public safety rights are protected.

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