

Under new Michigan law, shoplifting can be a felony charge

Written by Australian Business

September 24, 2013 /**24-7PressRelease**/ -- Shoplifting has long been thought of as a relatively minor offense, even primarily a [juvenile crime](#).

Most people assume that someone convicted of shoplifting would face a relatively small fine, some community service or a few days in jail at most.

However, a new Michigan law is getting tough on shoplifting. Under the Michigan organized retail crime law that went into effect in 2013, those convicted of shoplifting could face up to a five year prison term.

Shoplifting for the purpose of reselling goods can be punished by up to five years

Websites like eBay and Craig's List have made it easier than ever to fence stolen goods. The anonymity of the internet combined with the ability to reach a wide network of potential buyers provide a convenient way to quickly convert stolen goods into cash.

Seeking a stronger law enforcement tool against those who shoplift in order to easily resell goods, Michigan State Representative Joseph Graves introduced the Organized Retail Crime Act in 2012. The bill easily passed in the Michigan legislature, was signed into law, and recently went into effect. Specifically, the law makes shoplifting a felony punishable by up to five years in prison if the goods were stolen so that they could be resold.

The key to the new law is that in order to obtain a conviction, prosecutors will have to prove an express intent to resell goods that were shoplifted. An intent to sell the goods may be shown using a variety of types of evidence, such an admission made by the defendant or conduct that tends to indicate the goods were going to be sold, like listing them on eBay. But, proving intent can be difficult, and attacking the intent element of the new Organized Retail Crime Act can be one way a [criminal defense](#) attorney can get charges reduced to a lesser offense, such as retail fraud.

If you have been arrested, call a Michigan criminal defense attorney

Shoplifting is one of the most common property crimes in Michigan. According to the Michigan State Police, there were 19,071 arrests made for shoplifting within the state in 2011 alone. One

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of the reasons shoplifting is so common is that many individuals think of it as not a big deal; make no mistake, as a felony punishable by up to five years in prison under the new law, shoplifting is a very serious offense, and anyone accused of shoplifting needs to consider their options for a legal defense,

A criminal defense attorney can help you fight the charges against you. Your attorney may be able to get evidence collected in violation of your rights thrown out, resulting in reduced or dropped charges. If your case goes all the way to trial, your lawyer will stand by you in court, making persuasive arguments on your behalf. If you have been arrested for shoplifting, do not underestimate the gravity of your situation: get in touch with a Michigan criminal defense attorney today.

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