

October 02, 2013 /**24-7PressRelease**/ -- Michigan woman sentenced under new organized retail crime law

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The first conviction and sentencing for the offense of organized retail crime occurred recently in Kent County. In March, the new theft law went into effect and moved certain theft crimes from a misdemeanor to a felony.

The aim of the law is purportedly to go after organized networks of criminals who steal goods from stores and then resell them easily on the internet through Craigslist or eBay. Law enforcement may use the new stiffer charge against those who organize or supervise a theft and resale operation. However, planning to steal and sell a video game would also trigger the stiffer charge.

Conspiring to sell or receive merchandise that a person knows or believes to be stolen also would fall within the new charge. Someone who agrees to pick up a bag might face prosecution for organized retail crime if the person knew or had reason to believe the bag contained stolen goods.

The stiffer felony charge carries a maximum sentence of up to five years in prison and/or a fine of up to \$5,000. In addition, a person found guilty might also have to pay restitution to the retailer. Impact of the tougher law

A mother charged with the new crime allegedly took items valued at between \$200 and \$1,000 from a JC Penny store. She allegedly admitted to store security that she planned to keep some of the items. This would have resulted in a charge of second-degree retail fraud. The maximum penalty is a year in jail.

After additional questioning, she also admitted planning to sell some of the items to support her family. That admission lead to a charge of felony organized retail crime. She was unable to reach a plea agreement with County prosecutors and has a trial set for October. Facts in the first case to make its way through the justice system

Michigan woman sentenced under new organized retail crime law

Written by Australian Business

The woman recently sentenced under the new law, will serve four months in the Kent County jail. Her crime occurred at a local Kohl's Department Store. She allegedly placed items valued at approximately \$600 into a bag. She did not pay for the items, but dropped the bag near the front door of the store. A man then came and grabbed the bag.

The woman admitted that she planned to sell the stolen items and eventually pleaded guilty to the felony charge. Charges filed against the man alleged he knew the bag contained stolen items. However, the man was able to plead guilty to a lesser offense of regular retail fraud.

The new law may be over-inclusive. While the law was designed to go after organized crime operations, the first charges have been for rather minor thefts.

If arrested on suspicion of a shoplifting crime, contact a criminal defense attorney as soon as possible to discuss your rights. Stiffer Michigan penalties targeted at the resale of stolen goods may mean that jail time is a real possibility. A mistake that involves a felony charge can affect your future - making it harder to find housing and employment. A lawyer can help you navigate the criminal justice system and reach the best possible outcome available.