

Testimony – SB 2166

January 18, 2021 – Senate Judiciary Committee

Madam Chair Larson and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

I'm Eric Goerd, Executive Team Leader of Asset Protection, along with Andrew Seter, Store Director at Target Corporation presenting on behalf of the NDRA concerning retail theft. We stand with other retailers regarding a need for tougher penalties on retail theft crimes across the state of ND. Our Bismarck store generated \$64 million dollars in sales last year, with shortage totaling \$640,000. **TARGET urges a "DO PASS" recommendation on SB 2166.**

What is most important to us and other retailers is the implementation of harsher penalties for repeat shoplifters. In the past 3 years our Bismarck location has seen an increase in annual shortage from \$310,000 to \$640,000. This is largely due to repeat shoplifters that have been apprehended and charged out numerous times. When they are released, they are impacting our stores or other retailers again. From 2019 – 2020, our Bismarck location has seen an increase of 30% of *known* incidents and roughly \$55,000 impact, a 40% increase. These repeat subjects continue to impact our stores and when confronted, state they are not concerned with getting arrested by Law Enforcement under the current penalties. With the scope of our state, Target locations have seen a spike of 40% more incidents with a total of \$250,000 of possible shortage impact in four stores. Many of these incidents are from *known* shoplifters that have been charged out with theft in the past from Target or other retailers. To highlight the impact of theft on our business's margin, if a Dyson Vacuum Cleaner or a TV gets stolen, we would need to sell 4 or 5 more just to break even. Over time these incidents lead to higher overall costs to our business and the consumer.

From a team member and public safety standpoint, our teams and guests/customers are more at risk than ever before. Weapons are being used to defeat merchandise protection, physical confrontations have risen, and the use of Emergency Exits to flee stores have increased. We, as retailers feel that stronger penalties for repeat offenders along with harsher penalties for those that fight or run will help keep a critical percentage of repeat subjects out of our stores benefitting both communities and businesses across the state. **TARGET urges a "DO PASS" recommendation on SB 2166.**