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Peter R. Kehoe, Esq., Executive Director
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May 4, 2022

Senator Chuck Schumer
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Schumer:

The New York State Sheriff's Association urges the passage of the [INFORM Consumers Act](#) — federal legislation that will help us protect American businesses and consumers here in New York State.

Since 1934, our Association has been working to help improve the capability of Sheriffs to provide better services in law enforcement and protect the community. In recent years, an alarming trend has emerged that is hurting our state's businesses, workers, and everyday citizens. We have witnessed a dramatic increase in retail theft, beyond petty shoplifting into brazen and often violent "smash and grab" incidents that put our communities in danger. We know that in many cases these thefts are instigated and executed as part of increasingly sophisticated organized retail crime rings, which use online platforms to quickly and anonymously sell their stolen goods and ultimately use their profits to facilitate other nefarious crimes, including human and drug trafficking. Our efforts to protect person and property will be advanced if we can stop this activity at its source.

While we do our best to address this problem, we are hampered in that effort by the anonymity afforded by the internet to third party sellers. We understand the power that transparency can have to help us achieve our goal of protecting people and their property from theft. The INFORM Consumers Act, currently under consideration in Congress, is a bipartisan and common-sense piece of legislation that we believe is an important step toward that goal. The bill would require online marketplaces to collect and verify basic seller information and have sellers provide that information to consumers. Removing the veil of anonymity that allows criminal networks to operate in the shadows will make it harder for these criminals to build an illegal business selling stolen products. Increasing transparency in third-party marketplaces will give law enforcement an additional tool needed to help identify and hold perpetrators accountable and give justice to those harmed.

We believe this legislation would give law enforcement agencies in New York an important crime fighting weapon, and we urge its enactment into law.

Very truly yours,

Peter R. Kehoe, Esq.
Executive Director