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April 1, 2025

Honorable Mayor Rex Richardson  
Members of the Long Beach City Council  
411 W. Ocean Blvd  
Long Beach, CA 90802

**RE: Support for Agenda Item 23 – Long Beach Grocery Stores and Drug Establishments  
Anti-Retail Theft Staffing Standards and Prevention**

Dear Mayor Richardson and Members of the City Council,

As a Principal Co-Author of Senate Bill 442, I am writing to express my strong support for Agenda Item 23, introduced by Councilwomen Zendejas, Thrash-Ntuk, and Vice Mayor Roberto Uranga, which proposes the development of labor and staffing requirements for self-checkout operations in Long Beach grocery and retail drug establishments.

Retail theft, particularly in self-checkout areas, has become a significant public safety concern, affecting not only local businesses but also the workers and customers within these spaces. As highlighted in the staff report, retail establishments are experiencing increased theft—often facilitated by understaffed and poorly monitored self-checkout systems. These losses harm the economic stability of our city and put undue stress on workers and law enforcement.

This proposal thoughtfully balances public safety, economic responsibility, and workers' rights by recommending:

- Reasonable supervision ratios for self-checkout areas,
- Clear limits on the use of self-checkout systems,
- Prohibitions on self-checkout for age-restricted or security-sensitive items, and
- Enforcement mechanisms that ensure accountability and compliance.

These common-sense measures will create safer workplaces, improve customer experience, and reduce preventable calls to law enforcement for petty thefts. Moreover, requiring adequate

staffing levels reinforces Long Beach's commitment to supporting its workforce and maintaining vibrant, secure retail corridors.

I commend the proactive approach and urge you to approve this recommendation and direct city staff to begin ordinance development.

Let's ensure Long Beach continues to lead with policies that protect its workers, residents, and businesses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Lowenthal", written in a cursive style.

**JOSH LOWENTHAL**  
**ASSEMBLYMEMBER, 69<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT**



April 1, 2025

The Honorable Rex Richardson  
Mayor, City of Long Beach  
411 W. Ocean Blvd  
Long Beach, CA 90802

RE: Grocery Staffing Standards

Dear Mayor Richardson,

On behalf of Long Beach grocers, I write with concerns regarding the proposal for grocery store staffing standards. While we do agree that retail theft in Long Beach is a long standing and continuing issue for grocers, this proposal is fundamentally flawed and would have no real impact on the retail theft threat. Instead, it would require a costly overstaffing situation leading to increased cost for grocers to operate in Long Beach and likely price increases for Long Beach consumers.

We urge you to not chase a costly and ineffective mandate on grocers and instead work with grocery operators in partnership to address retail theft threat directly. The impact of retail theft in Long Beach is a serious issue and should be met head-on by the city, not simply dismissed by creating unhelpful and ineffective mandates on grocers.

All grocery employees are under strict direction to not engage or interfere in retail theft incidents or other customer disruptions. This direction is for the protection of our employees and is taken so seriously that a violation can result in discipline or dismissal. The only employees allowed to be involved in these situations are trained, qualified and it is specifically included in their job description. The safety of employees and consumers is, and always will be, our highest priority.

Retail theft incidents can be scary and concerning for employees and consumers, especially with the increasing rate of these crimes in Long Beach. However, there is a serious disconnect in the proposal by forcing additional employees, who are required to not involve themselves, in this area. We believe it is unsound and unwise for the city to address its retail crime problem through grocers and their employees. Instead, we call on you focus on retail criminals and their actions through law enforcement, not by creating new regulation and additional costs for grocery stores.

Long Beach voters just voted significantly in favor of Proposition 36 which provides new tools to stop retail theft criminals, especially those who are repeat offenders. This new law, which was approved in every California county, allows law enforcement to charge retail theft offenders with a more serious crime for multiple violations. However, without both law enforcement response and criminal charges for retail theft these frequent thieves will be able continue to steal, and likely at a much greater rate. There are currently few, if any, real consequences for retail theft offenders in Long Beach. This response must change to reverse the trend and reduce retail theft impacting all of Long Beach.

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April 1, 2025

The Honorable Rex Richardson

Unfortunately, the grocery industry has not been approached by the Mayor or any Councilmember to discuss retail theft in grocery stores, this proposal or ways to partner to reduce retail theft, which could include Prop 36 implementation. Instead, the city is choosing to place an expensive mandate on grocers which requires placement of additional employees in an area where they could be further impacted by retail theft. The line of reasoning in this proposal is both uninformed and backwards. We strongly urge Long Beach to directly combat retail theft with the grocery industry as a partner, not leave grocers and their employees to deal with the impacts and aftermath due to inaction.

I am sure we all agree the ongoing and increasing rate of retail theft impacts all of Long Beach negatively, including residents, employees and grocers. At this moment we believe you have a fundamental choice to make – combat retail theft directly or place the burden on grocers and their employees. Choosing to increase business mandates as a solution to retail theft sends a clear message to grocers and all Long Beach businesses, both present and future, that we are not valued.

We urge the rejection of the proposal at this time and ask the city to mobilize, in partnership with grocers, to prioritize the reduction of retail theft in Long Beach without ineffective and costly mandates. We appreciate your consideration and look forward to a proactive and effective joint effort to protect Long Beach from retail theft.

Sincerely,



Tim James

Director, Local Government Relations  
California Grocers Association

cc: Councilmembers, City of Long Beach  
City Clerk, City of Long Beach



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**From:** Mary Kasper <mkasper@superiorgrocers.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 1, 2025 2:34 PM  
**To:** Mayor; Council District 1; Council District 2; Council District 3; Council District 4; Council District 5; Council District 6; Council District 7; Council District 8; Council District 9; CityClerk  
**Subject:** Proposal to Evaluate Self-Checkout Options for Establishing Labor Standards Requirements for Long Beach Grocery Stores and Drug Establishments

**-EXTERNAL-**

Dear Mayor Richardson and Councilmembers Zendejas, Allen, Duggan, Supernaw, Kerr, Saro, Uranga, Thrash-Ntuk and Ricks-Oddie,

On behalf of Superior Grocers, I am writing to express our concerns with the above-referenced proposal. Superior Grocers proudly operates two supermarkets in the City of Long Beach.

As a Long Beach grocer, we are also concerned with retail theft in the city. Retail theft may occur anywhere in our stores. The safety of our employees and customers is our highest priority and we have directed our employees not to engage in retail theft incidents in our stores.

We are concerned with any staffing mandates, as such mandates remove our flexibility, operational experience and business judgment to deploy our staff as needed to best serve our customers. These mandates increase our operating costs, which will ultimately increase the price of groceries to our customers.

We have not been contacted by the City, the Mayor, or any Councilmember to understand the impact of retail theft on our customers, suppliers, employees, and our ability to operate in Long Beach. We welcome the opportunity to engage in this important dialogue with you.

We respectfully request that the City not move forward with the current proposal at this time, and discuss retail theft with grocers before making policy decisions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mary Kasper  
Chief Legal and Human Resources Officer  
Superior Grocers  
15510 Carmenita Road  
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670  
Office: 562-345-8597  
Mobile: 310-662-1332  
[mkasper@superiorgrocers.com](mailto:mkasper@superiorgrocers.com)

[Welcome to Superior Grocers - Superior Grocers](#)



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**From:** Jose Huerta <jhuerta@bigsaverfoods.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 1, 2025 11:59 AM  
**To:** Mayor; Council District 1; Council District 2; Council District 3; Council District 4; Council District 5; Council District 6; Council District 7; Council District 8; Council District 9; CityClerk  
**Cc:** Tim James  
**Subject:** Self Checkout Legislation

**-EXTERNAL-**

Dear Mayor Richardson and City Councilmembers,

As the CEO of a family-owned grocery chain operating eight stores across Southern California, including 2 locations in Long Beach, I'm writing to express our strong opposition to the proposed mandate requiring dedicated staffing at self-checkout stations.

We understand and share the City's concerns regarding retail theft and public safety. As a Long Beach grocer, we too are impacted by theft in our stores. However, it is important to note that for the safety of our employees and customers, our staff is directed not to engage directly in theft incidents. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive, collaborative approach—not one-size-fits-all mandates that could inadvertently create additional burdens without addressing the root problem.

Our primary concerns with this proposed legislation include the following:

**1. No Consultation with Local Grocers**

Despite being directly impacted by both retail theft and proposed operational mandates, we have not been contacted by the City, the Mayor's office, or any Councilmember to discuss the realities we face in-store. This lack of dialogue is concerning. Policy that affects our businesses and our employees should be informed by on-the-ground insights from those of us serving this community every day.

**2. Staffing Mandates Limit Operational Flexibility**

Mandating how and where we deploy personnel removes our ability to best serve our customers. We must be able to respond to real-time store needs—whether that's staffing registers, stocking essential goods, assisting customers, or maintaining cleanliness and safety throughout the store.

**3. Increased Operating Costs = Higher Grocery Prices**

Any policy that increases labor costs—particularly during a time of inflation and rising operational expenses—will ultimately affect the cost of groceries for our customers. In Long Beach, many of our shoppers are low-income residents who rely on affordable food access. Well-intentioned mandates should not result in higher grocery bills for those least able to absorb the impact.

**4. Technology Enhances, Not Replaces, Service**

Self-checkout is a tool that enhances customer convenience, helps manage peak traffic, and allows us to focus our team's efforts where they're needed most. These stations are already monitored by staff trained to assist and intervene when necessary.

We respectfully request that the City of Long Beach pause the advancement of this mandate. We urge you to engage directly with grocers to better understand the impacts of retail theft and collaboratively develop policies that address community concerns without creating unintended consequences for businesses and the families we serve.

We are proud to be part of the Long Beach community and are committed to working with you to create solutions that are both effective and equitable.

Sincerely,

**Jose Huerta**

Chief Executive Officer  
Big Saver Foods



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 [jhuerta@bigsaverfoods.com](mailto:jhuerta@bigsaverfoods.com)

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**From:** Bruce R. Brandlin <BruceR.Brandlin@northgatemarkets.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 1, 2025 11:47 AM  
**To:** Mayor; Council District 1; Council District 2; Council District 3; Council District 4; Council District 5; Council District 6; Council District 7; Council District 8; Council District 9; CityClerk  
**Subject:** Self-Checkout Proposal

**-EXTERNAL-**

Good morning, Mayor Richardson, Councilmembers and City Clerk for the City of Long Beach:

I am a Vice President for Northgate Gonzalez Markets and am respectfully writing to you pertaining to the self-checkout (SCO) proposal from Councilwomen Zendejas, Thrash-Ntuk and also Vice Mayor Uranga. We have done business in the City of Long Beach for more than 25 years and presently own and operate three grocery stores in your City with more than 400 employees. The sponsoring councilmembers claim that retail theft is a big problem in Long Beach and that additional staffing is needed at the self-checkout, which will prevent retail theft. We believe that this claim is not true. As a family owned grocery company for 45 years, we are also concerned with the amount of retail theft in Long Beach. It is important that you know that our employees have always been directed **not** to engage in retail theft incidents, for their safety and that of our customers. We are concerned that any staffing mandates will not be fair or effective. These mandates will remove the ability to deploy personnel to best serve our consumers in your City. We firmly believe that mandates of this type will cause the price of groceries to rise based upon the increased costs to operate our stores with additional staffing. For the record, we have not been contacted by the City, Mayor or any City Council members to ask for our thoughts or to educate us on the claimed impact of retail theft on our customers and employees. We believe the proposed mandate will affect our ability to properly operate the grocery stores we have in the City of Long Beach. We are requesting that the City not move forward on this proposal at the present time. We would like the City Council to perform some studies, as well as to discuss retail theft concerns with the grocers of this City before moving forward or making new policy. We should have an opportunity to communicate our thoughts and concerns to you before you make any commitments which will greatly affect all of the grocers in the City of Long Beach. We thank you for your consideration and look forward to working with you.

Bruce R. Brandlin  
*Vice President/Corporate Counsel*  
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714-687-7083  
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**From:** Courtney Carranza <Courtney.Carranza@pavilions.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 1, 2025 9:20 AM  
**To:** Mayor; Council District 1; Council District 2; Council District 3; Council District 4; Council District 5; Council District 6; Council District 7; Council District 8; Council District 9; CityClerk  
**Subject:** Self-Checkout Ordinance Concerns

**-EXTERNAL-**

Dear City Council Members,

As a local grocer in Long Beach, with 5 stores and 433 associates, I want to express our concerns about the proposed self-checkout ordinance.

First, we acknowledge the issue of retail theft in Long Beach. However, it is crucial to emphasize that our employees have been directed not to engage in any incidents of theft, prioritizing their safety and the well-being.

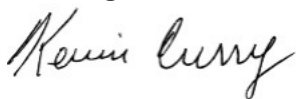
Additionally, we have concerns about potential staffing mandates that may arise from this ordinance. Such requirements could limit our ability to deploy personnel effectively, ultimately impacting the level of service we provide to our consumers. Moreover, any mandates imposed on grocers are likely to increase operational costs, which may, in turn, lead to higher grocery prices for our customers.

We would also like to highlight that, to date, we have not been reached out to by the city, the mayor, or any council member to discuss the implications of retail theft on our business operations, our employees, and, most importantly, our consumers.

Given these concerns, we request that the city pause any movement on this policy and engage with local grocers to have an open dialogue about retail theft and its impact before making any decisions.

Thank you for your consideration to this critical matter. We look forward to a constructive conversation that benefits both our community and local businesses.

Best regards,



Kevin Curry  
Division President  
Southern California Albertsons, Vons, Pavilions



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**March 31, 2025**

Long Beach City Council  
333 W. Ocean Blvd.  
Long Beach, CA 90802

**Re: Long Beach Grocery Stores and Drug Retail Establishments Anti-Retail Theft Staffing Standards and Prevention**

Dear Honorable Mayor Richardson and City Council Members,

We as community leaders and on behalf of our organizations are writing to express our support for the Establishment's Anti-Retail Theft Staffing Standards and Prevention regulation. Workers and customers deserve a comfortable, safe shopping experience and that local businesses should thrive in a vibrant community. In Long Beach, understaffed stores have contributed to poor shopping experiences, increased theft, and stressful environments for workers, all of which negatively impact our local economy and safety. As we continue to address these challenges, we need to prioritize staffing solutions that will benefit everyone involved.

Long Beach should be adequately staffed—with well-supported workers who are able to both prevent theft before it happens and provide the necessary support to create safer, more pleasant environments for customers. In addition to safeguarding our retail spaces, this approach will ensure the protection and well-being of our hardworking employees, ultimately enhancing community safety.

**Proven Solutions to Prevent Theft**

Smart solutions centered around increasing the number of staff in retail spaces are key to preventing theft before it occurs. Research and effective practices put in place by major retailers supports that more employees on the floor, coupled with improved store layouts, are effective in deterring shoplifting. This approach not only addresses the root causes of theft but also ensures that stores are places of service and support rather than spaces of tension and risk.

**The Importance of Adequate Staffing**

Research from major retailers like Lowe's, Costco, and Best Buy proves that more staffing and training are the most effective theft deterrent. As Lowe's CEO Marvin Ellison states, "*The greatest deterrent for any type of theft activity is effective customer service.*" These companies, by maintaining higher staffing levels, create an environment where theft is less likely to occur because there are more watchful eyes in the store. This has tangible benefits for both customers and employees.

In addition, increased staffing helps reduce the need for frustrating delays caused by items being locked up or inaccessible to customers. As Costco has found, investing in staff reduces shrinkage rates and enhances the customer shopping experience, leading to higher profits and smoother operations.

## What This Means for Long Beach

In Long Beach, we can adopt these proven solutions to create a more effective retail environment—one where workers are properly supported and customers feel safe. With smart solutions that increase staffing, we can:

- **Prevent theft before it happens** by having more employees actively engaging with customers and monitoring the store floor. Staff assigned to self-checkout should focus solely on monitoring and assisting customers at these stations. They should not be responsible for other tasks to ensure safety protocols are not compromised.
- **Reduce worker stress and turnover** by ensuring that they are supported by adequate staffing and resources.
- **Enhance safety** for both workers and shoppers, especially vulnerable populations such as seniors and people with disabilities.
- **Boost local businesses** by improving customer satisfaction, reducing theft-related losses, and fostering a stronger community environment.

We believe that these strategies will help create a safer, more productive retail environment in Long Beach, benefiting both businesses and the broader community. Staffed stores are safer stores!

United For the Betterment of Our Community,



### Supporting Citations

1. **Vera Institute of Justice.** (2025). "Smart Solutions to Prevent Retail Theft." Retrieved from [www.vera.org](http://www.vera.org).
2. **Lowe's Corporation.** (2024). "The Role of Customer Service in Preventing Retail Theft." Lowe's Annual Report. [Lowe's CEO: 'Greatest Deterrent' for Retail Theft Is Investing in Workers - Business Insider](#)
3. **Costco Wholesale Corporation.** (2023). "The Impact of Staff Investments on Theft and Customer Satisfaction." Costco Financial Report.

**From:** Celeste Wilson <cwilson@lbchamber.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 1, 2025 3:06 PM  
**To:** Mayor; Council District 1; Council District 2; Council District 3; Council District 4; Council District 5; Council District 6; Council District 7; Council District 8; Council District 9  
**Cc:** CityClerk  
**Subject:** Opposition to Agenda Item 23 - SCO Staffing Regulations  
**Attachments:** 4\_1\_2025\_Oppose\_SCO Staffing.docx

**-EXTERNAL-**

To the Honorable Mayor Richardson and City Council Members,

Please accept the attached letter for the official record regarding tonight's City Council meeting. The Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce strongly opposes agenda item 23 concerning staffing requirements for self-check out (SCO) stations in grocery and drug retail establishments.

This item would mandate burdensome staffing requirements, impose costly operational standards, and open the doors to frivolous litigation that will irrevocably harm the business community without effectively addressing retail theft.

Rather than increase real security measures or protect employees, this item risks driving up costs, reducing hours of operation, and even prompting complete closures in our underserved neighborhoods. Additionally, this item does nothing to protect or advocate for our small businesses that struggle the most under retail theft.

We strongly urge the city council to reject this item and instead engage directly with the business community to explore more collaborative, inclusive, data-informed approaches to retail theft - strategies that actually target thieves and do not penalize businesses that drive our local economy and supply our communities with basic, essential goods.

The Chamber respectfully requests that this letter be included in the public record for tonight's meeting.

Respectfully,

--

**Celeste Wilson**

*Government Affairs Manager*

[Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce](#)

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April 1, 2025

Honorable Mayor & Long Beach City Council  
411 W. Ocean Blvd  
Long Beach, CA 90802

**Subject: City Council Agenda Item 23. 25-54822: staffing and operational standards for self-checkout operations (SCOs) in grocery retail stores and retail drug establishments**

Dear Honorable Mayor and City Council Members:

On behalf of the Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber), representing nearly 900 businesses, I am writing to express our strong opposition to, and considerable concern with, Item 23. 25-54822 brought forth by Councilmembers Mary Zendejas, Tunua Thrash-Ntuk, and Roberto Uranga. This item proposes an ordinance mandating a 1:2 staffing ratio for self-checkout (SCO) stations in food and drug retail stores, limiting the number of items a customer may purchase at self-checkout to 15, imposing significant financial penalties on businesses, and creating a private right of action (effectively encouraging frivolous lawsuits).

While the Chamber supports efforts to enhance public safety, this proposal is fundamentally flawed. It will discourage business investment, increase costs for both businesses and consumers, and fail to address the root causes of retail theft.

**A Harmful Message to Incoming Businesses**

The intent of this item is to improve public safety by increasing staffing at SCO stations. Citing multiple studies and the March 12 Retail Theft Roundtable hosted by Mayor Richardson, the staff report paints a grim picture of Long Beach, describing rampant crime, dangerous customer-employee interactions, and insufficient police resources. If we enact policies that suggest Long Beach businesses must monitor every customer interaction to prevent theft, we reinforce a damaging reputation of our city as unsafe. Long Beach already struggles with economic competitiveness, with approximately 350 vacant storefronts - including 1.25 million square feet in downtown alone. The message we send to potential businesses must be one of opportunity, not deterrence. This item would do the latter.

**More Staff Will Not Prevent Crime**

In 2023, the California legislature passed **Senate Bill 553** (Cortese) *Occupational safety: workplace violence: restraining orders and workplace violence prevention plan* which effectively outlawed retail, grocery, and pharmaceutical staff from stopping thieves from stealing from their stores.<sup>1</sup> While we

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<sup>1</sup> Mayer, Chloe. (2023) *Bill to Stop Employees Confronting Shoplifters Passed by California Senate.*, Newsweek



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commend the council's intent to deter theft in retail environments and make Long Beach a safer space for workers and customers alike, increasing staff at SCO stations will not prevent or stop retail theft—it will merely put more employees in harm's way without addressing the core issue.

### **Let Proposition 36 Work First**

In November 2024, 61.8% of Long Beach residents joined voters statewide in overwhelmingly passing Proposition 36, a measure the Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce and the local business community strongly supported through advocacy efforts, strengthening penalties for retail theft.<sup>2</sup> From 2023 to 2024, the Long Beach Police Department reported a 16% increase in petty theft crimes valued under \$950—exactly the concern Proposition 36 aims to address. The item before the Council does not complement Proposition 36; rather, it imposes additional burdens on businesses before the new law has even had a chance to take effect. Nearly all sources cited in the staff report support the rationale for Prop 36, not a hyper-local city ordinance.

### **Staffing and Crime Are Separate Issues**

Keeping the people of Long Beach employed and keeping the people of Long Beach safe are paramount to our city's continued success and vibrancy. However, this proposal is a thinly veiled attempt to increase staffing under the guise of crime prevention. Mandating additional employees at SCO stations will only increase operational costs, forcing businesses to reconsider their presence in Long Beach. Instead of penalizing businesses for adopting technological efficiencies, the City should explore alternative solutions to enhance SCO security, such as:

- **Grants for SCO technology upgrades** through the VIP program or another potential pilot program
- **Fixed SCO systems** with weight sensors to reduce errors and theft
- **Improved monitoring technology** to enhance security without increasing labor costs

Instead of penalizing businesses for keeping up with advancing technology and rising operational costs, the city should consider other avenues to make businesses that deploy SCOs safer. Fixed SCO systems that use weight controls, which have been regarded as both the most deployed and the most effective approach thus far, would be a solution that tackles all issues.<sup>3</sup>

### **A Competitive Disadvantage for Long Beach**

This proposed ordinance will make Long Beach less competitive compared to surrounding cities. The proposed compliance thresholds are arbitrary, applying only to large retailers while exempting smaller

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<sup>2</sup> Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk, November 5, 2024 General Election Results, *Votes Cast by Community*

<sup>3</sup> Beck, Adrian. (n.d.). *Global Study on Self-Checkout in Retail use, Impact, and Control.*, ECR Retail Loss.

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locations of the same brands. For instance, the Rite Aid on Cherry Ave. and the CVS on Long Beach Blvd. would be exempt due to their footprint—highlighting the inconsistency of the proposal.

Businesses facing higher costs and an unfriendly regulatory environment will simply relocate to neighboring cities that do not impose these unnecessary burdens – or worse, close completely.

### **Disproportionate Harm To Low Income Families**

The Chamber recognizes that some grocers have left Long Beach due to increasing retail theft and financial losses. However, penalizing businesses with rising operational costs will only accelerate this trend, disproportionately harming low- to middle-income families who rely on nearby grocery stores.

We have seen the consequences of similar policies before. When Long Beach implemented hazard pay for grocery workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, Kroger closed 25% of its stores in the city, leaving low-income communities in food deserts. As a Kroger spokesperson noted:

“As a result of the city of Long Beach’s decision to pass an ordinance mandating extra pay for grocery workers, we have made the difficult decision to permanently close long-struggling store locations in Long Beach. This misguided action by the Long Beach City Council oversteps the traditional bargaining process and applies to some, but not all, grocery workers in the city [...] The irreparable harm that will come to employees and local citizens as a direct result of the city of Long Beach’s attempt to pick winners and losers, is deeply unfortunate. We are truly saddened that our associates and customers will ultimately be the real victims of the city council’s actions.”<sup>4</sup>

The same pattern will be repeated if businesses are again forced to absorb additional costs.

### **Neglecting Small Businesses**

While this item targets large retailers, it does nothing to address theft in small businesses, which are often hit the hardest. Nearly **41% of small business retailers** (1-20 employees) report increased theft, and **64% state that these losses result in higher consumer prices**.<sup>5</sup> Yet, this item does nothing to help them - it simply places a regulatory burden on larger businesses while small businesses continue to struggle.

### **A Statewide Issue, Not a Local One**

The proposed item is written nearly identical to **Senate Bill 1446** (Smallwood-Cuevas) *Grocery retail store and retail drug establishment employees: self-service checkout and consequential workplace technology* which failed on the Senate floor. Since its failure, proponents have shifted to a local ordinance strategy to impose similar requirements. However, issues like self-checkout regulations should be

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<sup>4</sup> Redman, Russell. (2021) *Kroger to shut two Long Beach stores due to local hazard pay mandate*. Supermarket News

<sup>5</sup> Metz, Jason. (2024) *The Impact of Retail Theft on Small Businesses and States*. Forbes

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addressed at the state level to ensure consistency and a fair market playing field for all cities, if it must be addressed at all.

### **We Can't Keep Putting Businesses In Legal Harm**

The enforcement provisions of this item are deeply concerning. It allows any private individual to bring a **civil lawsuit** against a business, with potential penalties of:

- **\$100 per employee per violation, per day** (up to \$1,000 per employee)
- **Attorney fees for prevailing plaintiffs**
- **Up to \$2,500 per hour in civil penalties**

This essentially invites **predatory lawsuits** against businesses already struggling to operate in Long Beach. The inevitable legal costs will be passed on to consumers, further increasing the city's cost of living.

The Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce urges the City Council to reject this agenda item and request that industry voices be involved in any future conversations regarding this topic. While we all want to improve public safety and deter theft, forcing businesses to increase staffing while ignoring technological solutions and economic realities is not the answer. We encourage the Council to consider more effective, balanced approaches that support both public safety and a thriving business environment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeremy Harris".

Jeremy Harris  
President & CEO  
Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce

1 World Trade Center, Suite 101. Long Beach, CA 90831 -101

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March 31, 2025

Long Beach City Council  
333 W. Ocean Blvd.  
Long Beach, CA 90802

**RE: Support for Agenda Item #23 - Labor Standards Requirements for Staffing and Operational Standards for Self-Checkout Operations (SCOs)**

Honorable Mayor Richardson and Members of the Long Beach City Council,

Long Beach Forward strongly supports item #23 on the April 1, 2025 City Council agenda to evaluate options for establishing labor standards requirements regarding staffing and operational standards for self-checkout operations (SCOs) in grocery retail stores and retail drug establishments.

Workers and customers deserve a comfortable, safe shopping experience and that local businesses should thrive in a vibrant community. In Long Beach, understaffed stores have contributed to poor shopping experiences, increased theft, and stressful environments for workers, all of which negatively impact our local economy and safety. As we continue to address these challenges, we need to prioritize staffing solutions that will benefit everyone involved. Long Beach should be adequately staffed—with well-supported workers who are able to both prevent theft before it happens and provide the necessary support to create safer, more pleasant environments for customers. In addition to safeguarding our retail spaces, this approach will ensure the protection and well-being of our hardworking employees, ultimately enhancing community safety.

According to the Vera Institute, smart solutions centered around increasing the number of staff in retail spaces are key to preventing theft before it occurs. Research supports that more employees on the floor, coupled with improved store layouts, are effective in deterring shoplifting. This approach not only addresses the root causes of theft but also ensures that stores are places of service and support rather than spaces of tension and risk.

Additionally, it is critical to recognize that harsh punishments and longer prison sentences do not reduce crime. Studies consistently show that lengthy sentences fail to deter shoplifting, with even short periods in

**OUR VISION**

Race and income do not determine one's future in Long Beach—it's a community where everyone is safe, connected, and healthy.

   @move1bforward



jail destabilizing individuals and making them more likely to reoffend. California already has some of the toughest shoplifting laws in the country, and instead of doubling down on punitive measures, we should focus on smart, preventative solutions that improve the experience for workers, customers, and businesses.

Research from major retailers like Lowe's, Costco, and Best Buy proves that well-trained and well-compensated employees are the most effective theft deterrent. As Lowe's CEO Marvin Ellison states, "The greatest deterrent for any type of theft activity is effective customer service." These companies, by maintaining higher staffing levels, create an environment where theft is less likely to occur because there are more watchful eyes in the store. This has tangible benefits for both customers and employees.

In addition, increased staffing helps reduce the need for frustrating delays caused by items being locked up or inaccessible to customers. As Costco has found, investing in staff reduces shrinkage rates and enhances the customer shopping experience, leading to higher profits and smoother operations.

In Long Beach, we can adopt these proven solutions to create a more effective retail environment—one where workers are properly supported and customers feel safe. With smart solutions that increase staffing, we can:

- Prevent theft before it happens by having more employees actively engaging with customers and monitoring the store floor.
- Reduce worker stress and turnover by ensuring that they are supported by adequate staffing and resources.
- Enhance safety for both workers and shoppers, especially vulnerable populations such as seniors and people with disabilities.
- Boost local businesses by improving customer satisfaction, reducing theft-related losses, and fostering a stronger community environment.

We believe that these strategies will help create a safer, more productive retail environment in Long Beach, benefiting both businesses and the broader community. We ask for your affirmative vote on Item #23 to advance these considerations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Suazo', with a stylized, flowing script.

James Suazo  
Executive Director  
Long Beach Forward



Long Beach Resister Sisters

April 1, 2025

### **Long Beach City Council**

**Subject:** Support for Reducing Self-Checkout Systems to Increase Public Safety

The Long Beach Resister Sisters strongly support the Policy Recommendation to Reduce Self-Checkout Systems in order to increase Public Safety. As highlighted during Mayor Richardson's Retail Theft Roundtable, our community is facing increasing incidents of theft, harassment, and violence in grocery stores, often exacerbated by the lack of staff oversight at self-checkout stations. Research confirms that self-checkout areas with limited staffing encourage theft and fraud while leaving both employees and customers vulnerable to dangerous interactions. A well-staffed checkout area is a deterrent to crime, provides better service to shoppers, and fosters a safer working environment for retail employees. Ensuring that stores prioritize human-staffed lanes is not only a public safety measure but also an investment in customer service and economic stability.

Studies show that adequate staffing significantly reduces theft, yet most self-checkout supervisors are overburdened and unable to monitor their areas effectively. Research from the ECR and Harvard Kennedy School Shift Project demonstrates that employees overseeing self-checkout stations often manage too many machines at once, limiting their ability to intervene in cases of fraud or misconduct. In fact, 96% of retail respondents in the ECR study agreed that additional staffing would be an effective or very effective way to address theft in self-checkout areas.

Furthermore, self-checkout disproportionately impacts vulnerable populations, such as seniors and individuals with disabilities, who struggle with these systems and face service delays due to a lack of available staff. Addressing these concerns about self-checkout stations and increasing employee oversight will not only deter theft but also improve customer experience and create a safer, more inclusive shopping environment.

We urge the council to enact this ordinance to ensure the safety of retail employees and customers by reducing theft, preventing workplace violence, and enhancing the overall shopping experience. We urge the Council to enact policies that prioritize community safety.

Sincerely,  
Long Beach Resister Sisters

**From:** Henry Rogers <Henry@greypinegroup.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 1, 2025 11:20 AM  
**To:** CityClerk  
**Subject:** Opposition to Agenda Item 23 – Retail Self-Checkout Regulations  
**Attachments:** 23.pdf

**-EXTERNAL-**

To the Honorable City Clerk:

Please accept this letter for the official record regarding tonight's City Council meeting. The South Bay Association of Chambers of Commerce (SBACC) strongly opposes Agenda Item 23 concerning labor standards requirements for self-checkout operations in grocery and drug retail establishments.

This proposed ordinance would mandate burdensome staffing requirements, impose restrictive operational standards, and create costly penalties that will harm the business community without effectively addressing retail theft. The requirement of one employee per two self-checkout stations with no other duties, along with 15-item limits and prohibitions on alcohol sales, fails to consider the diversity of retail operations and will significantly increase operating costs.

The SBACC, representing thousands of businesses across the South Bay region, believes this approach is counterproductive to both public safety and economic vitality. Rather than enhancing security, this ordinance risks driving up costs, reducing hours of operation, or even prompting store closures in underserved neighborhoods.

We urge the Council to reject this measure and instead engage with the business community to explore more collaborative, flexible, and data-informed approaches to addressing retail theft—strategies that target criminal activity without penalizing the very businesses that power our local economy.

We respectfully request that this letter be included in the public record for tonight's meeting.

Sincerely,

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**Henry Rogers**

Principal, The Grey Pine Group

📞 562-355-3825 | ✉️ [henry@greypinegroup.com](mailto:henry@greypinegroup.com)

🔗 [LinkedIn](#) | 🌐 [Website](#)



April 1, 2025

Mayor Rex Richardson  
Long Beach City Council  
411 W. Ocean Blvd.  
Long Beach, CA 90802

**RE: Opposition to Agenda Item 23 – Retail Self-Checkout Regulations**

Dear Mayor Richardson and Members of the Long Beach City Council,

On behalf of the South Bay Association of Chambers of Commerce (SBACC), which represents a coalition of chambers supporting thousands of businesses across the South Bay region, we write to express our strong opposition to **Agenda Item 23** concerning new regulations on self-checkout operations in grocery and drug retail establishments.

We understand and share the concern regarding the rise in retail theft across California. However, we believe the measures outlined in Item 23 are **overly prescriptive, economically burdensome, and ultimately counterproductive** to both public safety and economic vitality.

The proposed ordinance mandates rigid staffing requirements—one employee per two self-checkout stations with **no other duties**—and imposes operational restrictions such as a **15-item limit, prohibitions on alcohol and tobacco sales, and location constraints**. Violations would carry **civil penalties of up to \$2,500 per day**, creating a punitive environment for retailers already operating under narrow profit margins.

These measures **fail to account for the complexity and diversity of retail operations**, particularly in harbor-adjacent communities where employers face high labor costs and intense logistical demands. Rather than enhancing security, this ordinance risks **driving up operating costs, reducing hours of operation, or even prompting store closures** in underserved neighborhoods.

Moreover, this type of regulation undermines the innovative retail technologies that have helped businesses stay competitive and serve customers efficiently—especially critical in a post-pandemic economy where consumer preferences have shifted toward speed, convenience, and contactless service.

The SBACC advocates for **sensible, pro-business policies** that balance public safety with economic sustainability. We urge the Council to engage with the business community to explore **more collaborative, flexible, and data-**

**informed approaches** to addressing retail theft—strategies that target criminal activity without penalizing the very businesses that power our local economy.

Thank you for your consideration of our perspective. We remain committed to working with the City to craft policies that support both public safety and economic resilience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kimberly Caceres". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each name being capitalized and prominent.

**Kimberly Caceres**

2025 Board Chair

South Bay Association of Chambers of Commerce

STANDING COMMITTEES  
EDUCATION  
ENERGY, UTILITIES  
& COMMUNICATIONS  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
HEALTH  
PUBLIC SAFETY  
TRANSPORTATION

# California State Senate



JOINT COMMITTEES  
RULES  
SELECT COMMITTEES  
PORTS AND GOODS  
MOVEMENT  
CHAIR

**SENATOR LENA A. GONZALEZ**  
THIRTY-THIRD SENATE DISTRICT  
SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

April 1, 2025

Mayor and City Council  
411 Ocean Ave, 11<sup>TH</sup> Floor  
Long Beach CA, 90802

***RE: Agenda Item 23: Long Beach Grocery Stores and Drug Establishments Anti-Retail Theft Standards and Prevention***

Dear Mayor and City Council,

As the Senate Majority Leader and representative for California's 33rd Senate District, I write in support of Agenda Item 23, which seeks to establish labor requirements and operational standards for self-checkout operations in grocery and drug retail stores in Long Beach to enhance public safety.

Organized retail theft has had a chilling effect on communities throughout California. In response, the State Legislature passed a bipartisan retail theft bill package last year to hold shoplifter's accountable, providing protection for shoppers, business owners, and workers alike. As the state continues to address these challenges, it's important that we collaborate with and support our local cities and communities to implement innovative solutions.

The proposed item will ensure that retail establishments maintain adequate staffing levels, which will not only help deter retail theft but also improve employee morale and enhance the customer shopping experience. Research shows that increasing employee presence on the sales floor, along with improved store layouts, effectively reduces shoplifting and supports the safety and well-being of our hardworking employees. The City of Long Beach has an opportunity to lead by adopting proven strategies that will create a more secure and effective retail environment for all.

If you have any questions regarding my support, please do not hesitate to contact me at my office at (562) 256-7921.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lena Gonzalez".

Lena Gonzalez  
Senator, District 33

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