

# A.8947C (Reyes)/S.8358C (Ramos)

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| <b>BILL</b><br>A.8947C (Reyes)/S.8358C<br>(Ramos) |
| <b>SUBJECT</b><br>Retail Worker Safety Act        |
| <b>DATE</b><br>June 03, 2024                      |
| <b>OPPOSE</b>                                     |

The Business Council opposes A.8947C (Reyes)/S.8358C (Ramos) which would require businesses to create and implement preventative workplace violence programs as well as the installation of panic buttons.

The intent behind this legislation is to create a safer work environment for both consumers and employees, which is a goal employers share with the sponsors, however, forcing the installation of expensive panic buttons and costly training onto businesses is not the way to achieve this. This bill is a response to the rise in organized retail theft, which has been impacting businesses across the state. This legislation implies that the business owners are the ones at fault and seeks to force them to spend more money on costly security systems when they have already suffered large financial and property losses.

Additionally, employers are already required to provide a safe environment that “is free from recognized hazards that are causing or likely to cause death or serious harm to employees.” by federal law, specifically under the General Duty Clause, Section 5(a)(1) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. This clause requires employers to provide a workplace free of conditions or activities that either the employer or industry recognizes as hazardous and that cause, or are likely to cause, death or serious physical harm to employees when there is a feasible method to avoid such hazards. This legislation does little to supplement this clause and potentially creates a dangerous situation with the specification of requiring the installation of panic buttons.

The installation and maintenance of panic buttons can be costly but panic buttons may lead to the possibility of accidentally being used or misused. This creates the possibility to divert police officers from more pressing matters. Also, panic buttons are not able to give details to responding officers, unlike when calling 911, which could lead to a potentially much more aggressive response than the situation may require.

We recognize and agree that the work environment should be a safe place for employees and customers, however, we believe a solution should come from conversation had with all stakeholders to accomplish this. As well as a solution that does not unnecessarily burden businesses financially.

For these reasons, The Business Council opposes A.8947C (Reyes)/S.8358C (Ramos).