

Georgia's First Statewide Organized Retail and Cyber Crime Unit

AG set to expand his Gang Prosecution Unit to Columbus, Macon and Southeast Georgia

ATLANTA, GA – Attorney General Chris Carr is set to create Georgia's first statewide Organized Retail and Cyber Crime Unit, with funding provided in the state's FY 2025 budget signed today by Governor Brian Kemp. This new unit will take effect on July 1, 2024, with prosecutors and investigators dedicated to addressing organized retail theft and cybercrimes across the state. Carr will also expand his Gang Prosecution Unit to include new prosecutors and investigators in Columbus, Macon, and Southeast Georgia. Currently, the Attorney General's Gang Prosecution Unit is based in Atlanta, Albany and Augusta.

"From North Georgia and metro Atlanta to South Georgia and the coast, we have seen unprecedented success in putting away some of Georgia's most dangerous criminals," said Carr. "Now we're strengthening our efforts to combat an alarming increase in retail theft and cybercrime while continuing to pursue violent gang activity wherever it occurs. We're grateful for the support of Governor Brian Kemp and our partners in the General Assembly, and we look forward to continuing to work with them to protect the lives and livelihoods of all our fellow Georgians."

Georgia businesses are estimated to lose over \$3 billion to retail theft annually.

This includes \$1.6 billion in stolen goods and \$326 million in lost tax revenue, along with 17,000 lost jobs. According to a 2021 study, nearly 76 percent of retailers reported physical assault against an associate as a result of organized retail crime, while 41 percent reported attacks involving a weapon. This unlawful activity can also be linked to other criminal operations, including gang activity, human and drug trafficking, corruption, bribery and money laundering.

The Organized Retail and Cyber Crime Unit will be housed in the Attorney General's Prosecution Division, which also includes Carr's Gang Prosecution Unit, his Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit, and his Public Integrity and White Collar Crime Unit.

Since it began its historic work in July 2022, the Attorney General's Gang Prosecution Unit has secured nearly 40 convictions and indicted 135 individuals in Athens-Clarke, Barrow, Bryan, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Dougherty, Fulton, Gwinnett, Laurens, Muscogee, Richmond and Thomas counties. This includes four murder convictions and six gang convictions secured in Columbus over the past six months alone.

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