



## RHODE ISLAND POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

### PRESIDENT

Colonel Michael Correia  
Barrington Police Dept.

### VICE PRESIDENT

Chief Ryan Duffy  
Newport Police Dept.

### SERGEANT AT ARMS

Chief Brian Peters  
Portsmouth Police Dept.

### SECRETARY

Colonel Michael Winquist  
Cranston Police Dept.

### TREASURER

Chief Matthew Moynihan  
South Kingstown Police Dept.

### IMMEDIATE PAST

#### PRESIDENT

Chief Thomas Oates III  
Woonsocket Police Dept.

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chief Sidney Wordell, Ret.

### BOARD MEMBER

Dep. Director David DeCesare  
Security and Safety  
Rhode Island Supreme Court

March 3, 2026

The Honorable Matthew L. LaMountain, Chairman  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Support for S 2390

Dear Chairman LaMountain and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association, I am writing to express our strong support for S 2390 and to thank Senator Patalano for introducing this important legislation.

Organized retail crime continues to evolve across Rhode Island, and this latest scheme is particularly troubling because it directly targets families. Criminals are removing gift cards from retail displays, altering the packaging or magnetic strips, and returning them to store shelves. When a parent, grandparent, or friend later purchases and activates the card, the funds are immediately diverted to accounts controlled by the perpetrators. The intended recipient never receives the gift, and Rhode Island consumers are left bearing the financial loss.

Under current law, this conduct exposes a significant statutory gap.

Because a gift card has no monetary value until it is loaded at the register, individuals found in possession of large quantities of altered cards cannot always be charged with larceny. This limitation restricts law enforcement's ability to effectively intervene and disrupt what is clearly an organized and profitable criminal enterprise. S 2390 would address this gap and provide officers with the authority to pursue appropriate charges when individuals possess altered or fraudulently modified gift cards with intent to steal.

Although the full statewide scope of this activity is difficult to measure — in part because victims often do not immediately realize they have been targeted — recent enforcement actions demonstrate its seriousness. In the first three months of 2024 alone, separate arrests in Bristol, Narragansett, and South Kingstown resulted in the seizure of nearly 10,000 gift cards from individuals who had traveled from New York. The scale of those seizures underscores the coordinated and lucrative nature of this scheme.

Retailers are working to increase consumer awareness and improve safeguards. Law enforcement agencies are investigating and making arrests where possible. However, S 2390 would provide a critical statutory tool to ensure accountability and better protect Rhode Island residents from this growing form of organized retail theft.

The Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association respectfully urges the Committee's favorable consideration of S 2390. Thank you for your time and continued support of public safety in our communities.

Respectfully submitted,



Chief Sidney Wordell (ret.)  
Executive Director  
Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association