STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 47th Legislature (1999)

HOUSE BILL NO. 1668 By: Roggow

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to crimes and punishments; amending 21 O.S. 1991, Section 1731.1, which relates to shoplifting; clarifying language; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 21 O.S. 1991, Section 1731.1, is amended to read as follows:

Section 1731.1 A. As used in this section:

1. "Merchant" means an owner or operator of any mercantile establishment, and includes the merchant's employees, servants, security agents or other agents;

2. "Mercantile establishment" means any place where merchandise is displayed, held or offered for sale, either at retail or wholesale;

3. "Unemancipated minor" means any unmarried person under eighteen (18) years of age under direct supervision and care of the parent or legal guardian of the minor; and

4. "Emancipated minor" means any person under eighteen (18) who is married and/or not under direct supervision and care of the parent or legal guardian of the minor.

B. An adult or emancipated minor who takes possession of any goods, wares, or merchandise displayed or offered for sale by any wholesale or retail store or other mercantile establishment without the consent of the owner, seller, or merchant and with the intention of converting such goods, wares, or merchandise to ~~his own~~ personal

use without having paid the purchase price thereof, shall be liable in a civil action for the retail price of the merchandise if it is unsalable or the percentage of the diminished value of the merchandise due to the conversion together with attorney fees and court costs.

C. The parent or legal guardian having custody of an unemancipated minor who takes possession of any goods, wares, or merchandise displayed or offered for sale by any wholesale or retail store or other mercantile establishment without the consent of the owner, seller, or merchant, and with the intention of converting such goods, wares, or merchandise to ~~his own~~ personal use without having paid the purchase price thereof shall be liable in a civil action for the retail price of the merchandise if it is unsalable or the percentage of the diminished value of the merchandise due to the conversion together with attorney fees and court costs.

D. An adult, emancipated minor or unemancipated minor against whom judgment is rendered for taking possession of any goods, wares or merchandise displayed or offered for sale by any wholesale or retail store or other mercantile establishment without the consent of the owner, seller or merchant and with the intention of converting such goods, wares or merchandise to ~~his or her own~~ personal use without having paid the purchase price thereof, may also be required to pay exemplary damages.

E. In lieu of the exemplary damages prescribed by subsection D of this section, any adult, emancipated minor or unemancipated minor against whom a judgment for exemplary damages has been rendered hereunder may be required to perform public services designated by the court; provided, that in no event shall any such person be required to perform less than the number of hours of such public service necessary to satisfy the damages assessed by the court at the federal minimum wage prevailing in the state at the time of

judgment, but in no case less than Fifty Dollars ($50.00) nor more than Five Hundred Dollars ($500.00).

F. The provisions of this section are in addition to criminal penalties and other civil remedies and shall not limit merchants or other persons from electing to pursue criminal penalties and other civil remedies, so long as a double recovery does not result.

G. For the purpose of this section, liability shall not be imposed upon any governmental entity, private agency, or foster parent assigned responsibility for the minor child pursuant to court order or action of the Department of Human Services.

H. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a civil action or proceeding pursuant to this section may be commenced at any time within two (2) years after the conduct in violation of a provision of this section terminates or the cause of action accrues. If a criminal prosecution is brought by the state or by the United States to punish, prevent, or restrain any criminal action contained or described in this section, the running of the period of limitations prescribed by this section shall be suspended during the pendency of such prosecution, action, or proceeding and for one (1) year following its termination or conclusion.

I. An action for recovery of damages, pursuant to this section, may be brought in the small claims division of the district court where the damages sought are within the jurisdictional limits of the court, or in any other appropriate court.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 1999.

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