

I'm Betsy Martin, President of the Friends of Little Hunting Creek. In the annual cleanups we've done since 2002, we haul out a dozen or more shopping carts every year. The retailers haven't solved the problem despite our pleas for help.

Abandoned shopping carts degrade the social as well as the natural environment.

When people see social norms being violated, they do the same. In one research study, abandoned shopping carts led to more littering. When shopping carts were scattered around a parking garage, 58% of people tossed a windshield flier on the ground, compared to 30% who littered when carts were stored properly¹. Small infractions beget more and bigger ones.

The flip side is that cleaning up litter and abandoned carts reduces bad behavior. In an experiment in Philadelphia, vacant lots were either cleaned of trash and mowed, or left littered and untended. After a year, firearm shootings had declined by nearly 10 percentage points—but only near the lots that had been cleaned up.²

Litter and abandoned shopping carts set the stage for crime. SB631 will help maintain order.

This bill is fair. A retailer gets a notice a cart has been found and has 7 days to pick it up. Only then is it declared abandoned property and the owner charged for removal and disposal. Similar or tougher laws work in Virginia Beach and towns in California, Oregon, Washington, and New York. If big box stores like Walmart and COSTCO have figured out how to control their shopping carts in those places, they can do it in Fairfax County.

Nobody wants to live or shop in an area filled with litter and trash. It benefits retailers to help clean up this depressed area, reduce crime, and revitalize the Richmond Highway corridor.

Please vote for HB631, and join Senator Surovell in our pantheon of heroes—you too will receive the singular honor, already bestowed on him in 2015, of being named **Trash-Talking Legislator of the Year** by the Friends of Little Hunting Creek.

¹ K. Keizer, S. Lindenberg, L. Steg. "The Spreading of Disorder," *Science* 12 Dec 2008: Vol. 322, Issue 5908, pp. 1681-1685. <http://science.sciencemag.org/content/322/5908/1681>

² R. Moyer, J. M. MacDonald, G. Ridgeway, C. C. Branas, "Effect of Remediating Blighted Vacant Land on Shootings: A Citywide Cluster Randomized Trial", *American Journal of Public Health* 109, no. 1 (January 1, 2019): pp. 140-144. <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.2018.304752>