



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on August 16, 2026

New York Lawmaker Calls for Legalizing Shoplifting of Soap and Toothpaste

A New York State lawmaker said recently that people shoplifting items such as toothpaste and soap should not be punished because they have a “biological need” for those products.

Described by the [New York Post](#) as a “card-carrying member of the Democratic Socialists of America” who represents “sections of woke northern Brooklyn,” Democratic Assemblywoman Emily Gallagher made her remarks Thursday at a press conference outside Manhattan Criminal Court. Gallagher and other left-wing politicians appeared with Court Watch NYC, a criminal-justice “reform” group that claims over half the 360 arraignments they monitored over a four-day period were for misdemeanors.



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Said Gallagher:

Most of what we saw were crimes of poverty — people who are stealing things like toothpaste, people who were stealing things like, you know, soap. And that means if you’re stealing those things, you need them.

And we are choosing to protect billion-dollar companies, like CVS and Walgreens, over the people who are struggling to get by. So I would say that the true crime is that there is such incredible wealth disparity in this city that there are people who can be thrown in jail simply for having a biological need.

Gallagher went on to say she would continue to push for “treatment, not jail” for such offenses. “She and other pols at the event also called on fellow socialist Mayor Zohran Mamdani to follow through on his campaign promise to end ‘broken windows policing’ tactics by NYPD cops that target quality-of-life crimes like graffiti and fare evasion,” reported the *Post*.

Emily’s Hissed

Clearly proud of her pro-shoplifting speech, Gallagher [posted it](#) on social media, where she was speedily and deservedly roasted.

Commenter [Matt Van Swol](#), for example, wrote:

The entire foundation for a civilized society rests on private property, ownership, and not stealing.



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If you legalized stealing, society would literally crumble overnight.

Stealing should face SEVERE punishment.

In reality, noted the *Post*, “first-time shoplifting offenders rarely get jailtime.” Furthermore, “lack of enforcement pushed by lefty pols like [Gallagher] statewide has forced many drugstores to lock products in plastic cases.”

As X commenter [shoe](#) observed, “People arent [sic] arrested enough for ‘stealing toothpaste’ and now the people who actually follow the rules of society have to wait 15 minutes for some poor wagie to unlock the plexiglass toothpaste cagey.”

Bronx Cheer

Bronx supermarket shoppers interviewed by the *Post* were similarly “aghast over Gallagher’s remarks.”

“It’s foolish to think one should not be punished for stealing. It is a crime,” said the Reverend Susan Webb, 68.

“Mamdani can implement that in his [city-run grocery] stores, so if you don’t have the necessities, you can go there and get them for free.”

Academic advisor Jeanette Mack, 49, told the paper:

Allowing people to shoplift with no consequence is wrong. I’m a single mom and at one time I had four jobs. I would never think of stealing anything.

They already closed a Rite Aid [drug store] around here. Now I’m worried that if they put [Gallagher’s policy] in place, they are definitely going to close this supermarket, and I would suffer because I’d have to drive to somewhere else instead of walking. And gas price nowadays, that’s another thing.

Store manager Edwin Pichado, 33, said, “Goods going out, but no money coming in. We cannot run a business like that. If [shoplifters] see that you do nothing, they’ll keep coming back. They tell their friends, and it becomes a free for all.”

According to the *Post*:

Gallagher has a long history of bizarre actions and remarks since being sworn into the state ... Assembly in January 2021, including using a GoFundMe campaign in October 2021 [to raise money for her cat](#) Roland’s emergency surgery bill.

She’s also racked up dozens of traffic and parking tickets despite [pushing an anti-car agenda](#) in Albany. And she has allegedly blocked constituents from posting comments she doesn’t like on her social media pages.

Queens English

Current and former Queens lawmakers also shredded Gallagher.

“This is the kind of backwards, left-wing lunacy I would expect from someone who values the rights of criminals more than those of business owners,” Republican Councilwoman Joann Ariola told the



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Post. “Policies that Gallagher is pushing are exactly what’s driving so many of them away.”

Republican Councilwoman Vickie Paladino posted a [well-reasoned retort](#) to Gallagher’s speech:

People like Emily Gallagher try to obfuscate reality because they want to enable this very activity. They know it’s devastating to retail stores and that’s the point — they’re communists and want to use crime to force these stores to close. It’s social justice.

Your toothpaste and shampoo isn’t [sic] locked up because a poor mom once stole a bottle. Walgreens and CVS aren’t closing locations citywide because they lost a few bars of soap.

This is happening because organized gangs have been allowed to constantly ransack the stores, enabled by people like Emily Gallagher.

And the rest of us pay dearly for it. When stores have to take these kinds of risks just to open, it drives up the cost of products across the board for the rest of us. Remember that next time they lecture about “cost of living” here.

They just don’t care. Soon enough we’ll be hearing about the need for government-run drug stores to replace the shops they drove out of business.

But former Democratic Councilman Robert Holden may have put it best, [posting](#) simply that Gallagher “is a major dope.”



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