



The Voice of Small Business®

ALASKA

February 25, 2013

The Honorable Pete Kelly
Co-Chair, Finance Committee
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

RE: Senate Bill 64

Dear Senator Kelly:

On behalf of the National Federation of Independent Business/Alaska, I wish to respectfully inform you of our concern about the felony threshold in Senate Bill 64. In a recent NFIB/Alaska member ballot our membership voted overwhelmingly to oppose **any** increase in the felony theft threshold. The National Federation of Independent Business is the largest small-business advocacy group in Alaska.

NFIB/AK members recognize that \$500 is a significant amount to a small business. We have worked with Senator Coghill and the NFIB/Alaska leadership Council to agree to remove our opposition to an increase to \$750. We still strongly believe the state shouldn't be making it easier for thieves to steal from our businesses by raising the felony theft threshold above that level. There is evidence that theft rings are becoming very sophisticated; they are aware of the felony limits and will steal up to that amount. Thus, while there might be potential savings in judicial processes, businesses would see an increase in the amount of theft in goods. Instances of individuals "stealing to feed their families" are rare, and the courts and prosecutors have enough discretion to handle these circumstances appropriately.

I have attached testimony on this issue from the February 25, 2013 Senator Judiciary Committee. It includes testimony by Chris Nettels, a representative of NFIB as well as Detective Ross Plummer. You will see Mr. Nettels concern, having been a victim of theft – a victim we ought not forget in this legislation. The acknowledgement by Detective Plummer relative to treatment of misdemeanor crimes is particularly significant. He confirmed that businesses have reason to be concerned that misdemeanor thefts receive less police attention.

We believe that simply inflation-proofing crime is poor public policy. Our justice system ought to protect citizens and their property, not reduce the level of risk for thieves.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Dennis L. DeWitt", is written over a horizontal line.

Dennis L. DeWitt
Alaska State Director

Cc: Senate Finance Committee
NFIB/AK Leadership Council