

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE ZACK FIELDS

Fairview • South Addition • Government Hill • Downtown • Eastridge

House Bill 15

Sponsor Statement

“An Act relating to sentencing for vehicle theft in the first degree.”

Far too many of our neighbors have been victims of vehicle thefts. Some families have been victimized repeatedly and have had cars stolen multiple times within a single week. Police have said that criminals know they won't go to jail for stealing cars in our communities. It has become apparent that repeat offenders are striking multiple times in a month or even a week. Police officers in my community suggested introducing this bill.

While car theft is a violation of privacy and property, it has a ripple effect on its victim's lives and on our communities. Losing a vehicle and form of transportation can keep victims and their families from going to work, driving their children to school or to daycare, and running errands for themselves and their family.

Since 2013, the rate of vehicle thefts has increased 150%. In 2013, there were 931 instances of car theft in Anchorage. In 2018, there were 2,423 instances in Anchorage. The total reported property loss for vehicle thefts statewide in 2017 was over \$34.1 million.

In response to the rush of car thefts seen in our state, House Bill 15 addresses the issue of first time offenders. The bill requires mandatory jail time for car thieves, with a mandatory minimum sentence of 120 days to two years in jail.

House Bill 15 would help ensure our community is safe by strengthening penalties for vehicle theft.