



March 1, 2019

Chairs Zack Fields, Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins, and Members of the Committee  
State Affairs Committee  
Alaska House of Representatives

RE: House Bill 15 – Sentencing for Vehicle Theft

Dear Chairs Fields and Kreiss-Tomkins and Members of the Committee:

The National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) is a national, not-for-profit organization supported by approximately 1,100 property and casualty insurance companies, including many who write business in Alaska. Working hand-in-hand with our member companies and law enforcement, we investigate organized criminal conspiracies dealing with insurance fraud and vehicle crime.

Alaska vehicle theft has skyrocketed. Between 2011 and 2017, vehicle thefts in Alaska increased by 112 percent, whereas nationally, during the same period, vehicle thefts only increased 11 percent. Out of the nation's 382 metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), the Anchorage MSA has the second highest per capital auto theft rate, and the Fairbanks MSA falls in the top-15 percent at number 46.

Vehicle theft is not just an inconvenience. Organized criminal rings are increasingly turning to stolen cars to make big money or finance their operations by reselling them to unsuspecting buyers, shipping them overseas, stripping them of their valuable parts, or using them in the commission of other crimes. The chair of the International Association of Chiefs of Police's Vehicle Crimes Committee states "the first step of violent crime and high-impact crime begins with stolen vehicles. You need stolen vehicles for crimes like shootings, robberies, homicides, drug dealing and insurance fraud."

The impact to car theft victims can also be significant. Those that have their vehicle taken by force face injury and in extreme cases, death. When cars are stolen, the consequences often include missed work, loss of income, missed appointments, and expenses. Even when cars are recovered, contents are often stolen and the car is trashed, including remnants of drug use.

Therefore, we ask for your support of HB 15 which seeks to increase the sentence of auto theft to a minimum of 120 days of imprisonment which will help keep career car thieves off the street and send a message that vehicle theft will not be tolerated.

Thank you for your review and consideration; if you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at [hhandler@nicb.org](mailto:hhandler@nicb.org) or 847-544-7083.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Howard Handler".

Howard Handler  
Director, Government Affairs