

The Auto Theft Prevention Act
Reps. Mikie Sherrill (D-NJ) and Don Bacon (R-NE)

According to the National Insurance Crime Bureau, almost 500,000 vehicles worth an estimated \$4.5 billion were stolen in the first half of 2022, representing a 25% increase in thefts compared to the first half of 2019. Rising auto theft rates have also led to an increase in associated crimes, both those committed during the auto theft and those carried out afterwards using the stolen vehicle, that have greatly impacted public safety in our communities.

In response to these alarming trends, police departments across the nation have devoted additional resources to deterring thefts and prosecuting those responsible, including to a growing extent criminal theft rings. In New Jersey, for example, the state government has made a \$10 million investment in automated license plate recognition technology to help police departments identify and apprehend those involved in motor vehicle thefts. However, under-resourced police departments, particularly in smaller communities, are often unable to fund these types of investments that can play a significant role in keeping our communities safe.

The Legislation Would:

Provide state and local law enforcement agencies with federal grant funding to help them combat auto thefts and stolen vehicle trafficking.

This legislation will create a new competitive grant program within the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) to fund state and local law enforcement efforts to combat auto thefts.

Grants can be used by police departments to purchase equipment used to combat auto theft such as law enforcement vehicles and license plate readers, hire additional law enforcement officers and support staff, fund overtime costs and additional compensation for law enforcement officers and support staff, provide resources for joint task forces, and fund law enforcement data collection and research activities related to combating auto theft.

Grants will be made to each state, with prioritization of funds determined by the state's aggregate car theft rate and their percentage change in car thefts over the past three years. States will then provide at least 50% of their funds as subgrants to local law enforcement agencies and at least 25% of their funds as grants to state law enforcement agencies, with the remaining funding available as grants to state or local law enforcement agencies at the discretion of each state's Attorney General.

In addition, the legislation creates a new eligible use of funds within the existing COPS grant program that allows police departments to use their funds on new equipment, hiring, and compensation to help combat auto thefts.

If you have any questions, please contact Chris.Taylor@mail.house.gov with Rep. Sherrill or Matthew.Duglin@mail.house.gov with Rep. Bacon.