

February 17, 2022

Chair Warren Limmer and Members of the Committee
Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety Finance and Policy
Minnesota State Senate

RE: SF 2843 – Vehicle Theft Penalties - SUPPORT

Dear Chair Limmer and Members of the Committee:

The National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) is a national, century-old, not-for-profit organization supported by approximately 1,200 property and casualty insurance companies, including many who write business in Minnesota. Working hand-in-hand with our member companies and Minnesota law enforcement, we help to detect, prevent, and deter insurance crimes, including vehicle theft. While NICB provides value to our member companies, we also serve a significant public benefit by helping to stem the estimated billions of dollars in economic harm that insurance crime causes to individual policyholders across the country every year.

Nationally, auto thefts increased dramatically in 2020. In fact, 2020 saw the most vehicle thefts in more than a decade. Minnesota mirrored that trend: there was a 32 percent increase in thefts between 2020 and 2019. While 2021 data is not yet finalized, early indicators point to high rates of auto theft continuing through the end of last year.

Beyond the loss to an owner and the resulting financial impacts – including in the form of higher insurance premiums for Minnesota consumers – vehicle thefts often have serious second-order effects on society. For example, vehicles are frequently stolen under violent conditions resulting in physical harm to car owners and other victims. Additionally, organized criminal rings are increasingly stealing cars as an alternative revenue stream as well as to commit other violent crimes.

Senate File 2843 would provide enhanced criminal penalties for vehicle theft, when the vehicle is used in the furtherance of a felony crime of violence. This proposal would go a long way towards helping stem the tide of increased automobile crime in Minnesota.

Accordingly, we ask for your strong support in favor of SF 2843.

We thank you for this scheduling a hearing and for considering our views as you deliberate the merits of the bill. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at csepich@nicb.org or (847) 772-7667.

Sincerely,

Craig Sepich

Craig Sepich
Senior Legislative Analyst
Strategy, Policy, and Government Affairs
National Insurance Crime Bureau