



## Ramsey County Sheriff's Office

Bob Fletcher, Sheriff

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### Office of the Sheriff

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April 3, 2024

The Honorable Zack Stephenson  
State Representative, District 35A  
Chair, Commerce Finance and Policy  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
449 State Office Building  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Reference: **Support of House File (HF) 4151**  
**Automobile Theft Prevention Surcharge Increased**

Dear Chair Stephenson:

I am writing to ask you to support HF 4115, which is a bill to increase funding for the automobile theft prevention program. Since the program began almost 30 years ago, the \$.50 surcharge has not changed.

Funding provided from this program continues to improve the safety and well-being of the state's capital county. Coordinated efforts in Ramsey County have received some of the largest amounts of funding, including \$500,000 for a youth intervention program. Funding ensures successful partnerships to interrupt auto thefts and carjackings before they happen, hold offenders accountable, and help young people involved in these offenses connect with services designed to keep them from reoffending. Funding also provides for partnerships with community, including restorative justice providers.

According to the Department of Commerce, a total of 16,743 vehicle thefts with a total estimated property value of \$236 million were reported across Minnesota in 2022, the highest number since 1997. In 2023, auto thefts continued to rise across the state, but Ramsey County saw a 36% decrease.

Increasing funds available for auto theft prevention and intervention programs will allow other jurisdictions to not only increase effective traditional law enforcement prevention efforts, but also establish the kind of innovative and collaborative programs that have brought success to Ramsey County.

Sincerely,

Bob Fletcher  
Ramsey County Sheriff

Copy: The Honorable Ethan Cha  
State Representative, District 47B

April 8, 2024

Chair Zack Stephenson and Members of the Committee  
Committee on Commerce, Finance, & Policy  
Minnesota House of Representatives

RE: House File 4151 – Auto Theft Prevention Surcharge – Support

Dear Chair Stephenson 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. 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.

Law enforcement agencies and communities across the United States continue to be plagued by record levels of vehicle crime as monthly theft totals nationwide consistently exceeded 80,000 in 2023. According to analysis conducted by NICB, 17,832 vehicles were stolen in Minnesota in 2022, ranking the state 11<sup>th</sup> in vehicle thefts across the country based on population.

Beyond the loss to an owner and the resulting financial impacts – including in the form of higher insurance premiums for Illinois 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.

House File 4151 increases the automobile theft prevention surcharge to \$1 per vehicle every six months, an increase of 50¢. The increased funding provides the Automobile Theft Prevention Program with additional resources to help keep pace with rising inflation. This proposal would go a long way towards helping stem the tide of increased vehicle theft in Minnesota.

**Accordingly, we strongly ask for your strong support in favor of House File 4151.**

We thank you for 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  
Director  
Office of Strategy, Policy, & Government Affairs  
National Insurance Crime Bureau