



March 19, 2024

Hon. Dick Sears, Jr. and Members of the Committee
Committee on Judiciary
Vermont Senate

RE: H. 563 – Attempted Auto Theft - Support

Dear Chair Sears 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 Vermont. Working hand-in-hand with our member companies and Vermont law enforcement and regulatory agencies, we help to detect, prevent, and deter insurance crimes, including vehicle theft.

Vehicle thefts are on the rise across the country, including in Vermont. While 2023 vehicle theft numbers are not yet finalized, Vermont vehicle thefts increased 163 percent from 2020 to 2022. Moreover in 2020, out of the 390 U.S. metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) the Burlington-South Burlington, VT MSA ranked (*adjusted for population*) in the bottom 15 percent for vehicle thefts; in 2022 the Burlington-South Burlington MSA shot to the top-third. Vehicle theft not only is a big financial hit to Vermonters, but can lead to missing school, work, and other important obligations. Worse, stolen vehicles are often used in the commission of secondary crimes, including robbery, murder, arson, and drug and human trafficking.

Vehicle break-ins are equally concerning. Thieves often use items and documents stored in cars to commit more crimes. Personal papers found within the vehicle can be used to commit identity theft. Vehicle titles can be used to create fake titles. Garage door openers found in cars are regularly used to gain access to and burglarize homes. And too often extra sets of car keys left inside the vehicle are used to then steal the car.

Accordingly, we strongly encourage your support of H. 563 which seeks to close vehicle theft and break-in loopholes in Vermont statute, including creating the crimes of attempted auto theft and entering a vehicle without consent

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 hhandler@nicb.org or 312-771-3974.

Sincerely,

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

Howard Handler, MPPA

Senior Director, Office of Strategy, Policy, and Government Affairs