



March 7, 2019

Chair Jennifer Ann Williamson and Member of the Committee
Committee on Judiciary
Oregon House of Representatives

RE: House Bill 2328 – Unauthorized Use of a Vehicle

Dear Chair Williamson 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 Oregon. Working with our member companies and law enforcement, we investigate organized criminal conspiracies dealing with insurance fraud and vehicle crime.

With around 800,000 vehicles stolen each year in the United States, every state in the country is affected -- but not equally. Some states, and communities within, see significantly higher vehicle theft rates than other states, even among geographies with similar socioeconomics.

This is the case in Oregon where, between the years 2012 and 2017, vehicle thefts, according to the FBI's National Crime Information Center, increased by 53.51 percent; comparatively, during the same period, national vehicle thefts only increased 10.74 percent.

Nearly all the Oregon vehicle theft growth within that period occurs, and sharply, immediately after two notable Court of Appeals cases that, based on their interpretation of existing state statute, have raised the bar to an excessively-difficult standard necessary to secure a conviction against an alleged car thief.

Vehicle theft is not a benign crime. Vehicles are often stolen under violent conditions, and increasingly criminal rings are turning to stolen cars to make big money and to commit other crimes. Vehicle theft increases familial stress, impedes access to work, and leads to higher insurance premiums for all Oregonians.

For these reasons, the National Insurance Crime Bureau joins the chorus of law enforcement, prosecutors, and public officials in support of HB 2328. HB 2328 will, by amending the mental state from “knowingly” operating a vehicle without the owners’ consent, to being “aware of and recklessly disregard(ing) a substantial and unjustifiable risk” of driving a vehicle without the owners’ consent, close the loopholes in the law to ensure Oregon is not a haven for car thieves.

Thank you for your consideration. Please be sure to contact me at 847-544-7083 or hhandler@nicb.org if you have any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

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

Howard Handler
Government Affairs Director