

**REPORT TO THE WASHINGTON AUTO THEFT
PREVENTION AUTHORITY
(WATPA)**

**Report in Support of Recommendations to the Washington
State Legislature Regarding the Operations and Work of
WATPA: Results of Background Research**

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Executive Summary

In response to a very serious motor vehicle theft problem within the state, Washington State lawmakers enacted and Governor Christine Gregoire signed into law the *Elizabeth Nowak-Washington Auto Theft Prevention Act of 2007*. The statute was designed to combat the problem of motor vehicle theft through a combination of measures, including harsher laws and punishments and the creation of a new state entity, the **Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority** (WATPA) empowered to implement promising initiatives for combating the motor vehicle theft problem. WATPA is required to determine the scope of the motor vehicle theft problem in Washington, including identifying areas where vehicle theft problems are the greatest. In addition, WATPA is required to report to the legislature the nature of its activities, any findings derived from research undertaken, and recommendations for future activities for the period of the preceding year by December 31 (E3SH1001). This report was assembled in partial fulfillment of that express legislative requirement.

In 2007, Washington State ranked 7th among the states for total number of motor vehicle **thefts** for that year, and 5th among the nation's states for motor vehicle **theft rates** (likelihood of auto theft victimization for car owners). The great majority of auto thefts occurred in King, Pierce, Snohomish, Spokane, Clark, and Yakima Counties. While motor vehicle theft has decreased somewhat in Washington since a high point in 2005, the national motor vehicle theft rate remains considerably lower than occurs in our state averaging 363.3 vehicle thefts per 100,000 residents. In Washington, a total of 37,904 vehicles were stolen in 2007; this represents a rate of 581.6 vehicles stolen for every 100,000 inhabitants. The trauma associated with experiencing auto theft is significant for most victims of this crime, in addition, the economic loss of locally stolen vehicles in Washington is substantial as well, totaling over \$180 million for the year.

In Washington the recovery rate for motor vehicles stolen in 2007 was 71%. Since 2002, the recovery rate in our state has been consistently above 67%. This represents good news in light of national standards; the national recovery rate for 2006 was 63%. In the area of clearance by arrest, however, the comparative picture is not so favorable. In 2006, the clearance rate in Washington State was 8.92%; the national clearance rate was considerably higher at 12.6%. This disparity suggests the need for more investigative resources and more prosecutorial resources being needed to close this gap. In this regard, an estimate of \$26,445,000 was made relating to the investigative and prosecutorial resources that would be needed to investigate and carry to conviction every actionable (i.e., sufficient evidence to assign case to investigator) auto theft report made in 2007.

An analysis of arrest data and the investigation of the criminal histories of persons charged with auto theft indicate that the majority of Washington motor vehicle theft offenders are white males between the ages of 15 and 27. Among these offenders drug involvement looms rather large. Of first time offenders, nearly 40 percent had a prior drug charge in their criminal history. Among those offenders who had committed multiple auto theft offenses, approximately 60% had a drug charge in their criminal history record.

Another aspect of this report entailed the collection of survey data from a limited number of persons directly involved in the collective statewide effort to protect the citizens of Washington from victimization by auto theft. An on-line survey with follow-up contact was conducted among various law enforcement personnel and county prosecutors, and the results of those surveys are reported here. The questions posed related to the nature of the auto theft problem in their own jurisdiction, the views they have on appropriate countermeasures, how they viewed the auto theft prevention activities of other states, and their views on the programs of WATPA in our state.

The combination of primary research, detailed interviews with key actors, review of archival records, study of comparable authorities in other states, and the analysis of survey results leads to the listing of the following recommendations.

Recommendations

1) Increase the number of law enforcement and prosecutorial personnel assigned to combat motor vehicle theft.

The gap in clearance rates between Washington and the balance of the country likely reflect a paucity of investigative and prosecutorial resources available in the areas of the state where the problem is the most concentrated.

2) Increase inter-agency cooperation.

The effectiveness of durable multi-agency task forces and coordinated real-time information sharing are clear from the experience of the King Co.-led effort featuring a strategically located crime analyst and a set of collaborative agencies. The survey results indicate that this represents a “best practice” which should continue to be encouraged by WATPA.

3) Improve the Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority website.

In comparison to the websites maintained by comparable entities in other states the WATPA website should be enhanced in both the informational content and the presentation of program elements.

4) Increase citizen awareness of motor vehicle theft through public service announcements and additional public awareness campaigns.

The experience of other states is that the periodic use and re-use of well-crafted public service announcements serve as a valuable tool in auto theft prevention. Grant Clark at WATPA should enhance use of this countermeasure to auto theft.

5) Conduct program evaluations that analyze program impact and outputs.

Few state entities similar to WATPA conduct systematic evaluations of the outcomes associated with their programs. This important aspect of WATPA’s work should not be as neglected as it is elsewhere.

Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority: Program Description and Core Elements of Initial Operation

WATPA: Brief Foundational History

The Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority (WATPA) was established by the 60th Washington Legislature through Engrossed 3rd Substitute House Bill 1001 (The Elizabeth Nowak-Washington Auto Theft Prevention Act) during the 2007 Regular Legislative Session (see statement of legislative intent in Appendix C). The legislature developed WATPA based on the model presented by the Arizona Automobile Theft Authority. The effective date of E3SH1001 was July 1, 2007; provisions creating and governing the operation of WATPA were duly codified in RCW 36.28A.130 and Chapter 46.66 RCW (WATPA). WATPA was created as part of a comprehensive legislative package designed to confront the problem of motor vehicle theft in the state of Washington. WATPA is charged with determining the scope of the problem of motor vehicle theft, including identifying the particular areas of the state where the problem is the most severe. It is also responsible for assessing the utility for Washington of the various methods of combating the problem of motor vehicle theft employed elsewhere in the nation. WATPA is required to report its activities, findings, and recommendations to the legislature annually, reporting on the preceding year by December 31.

WATPA Mission

WATPA's official mission is: *To reduce motor vehicle thefts in the state of Washington. Reducing motor vehicle theft will be accomplished through financial assistance to public agencies, increased public awareness of vehicle theft issues and how to avoid having a vehicle stolen, and working with the Washington Legislature to address emerging vehicle theft issues.*

WATPA Governance and Operations

WATPA was created as a legal entity housed within the *Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs* (WASPC). WATPA's headquarters office is located in Lacey, Washington. WATPA governing board consists of ten members, all of whom are appointed by the Governor to staggered terms of office. Terms of office are of four years duration, with the exception of the first duly established authority. The governing board of WATPA consists of the Executive Director of the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, the Chief of the Washington State Patrol, two municipal police chiefs, two county sheriffs, one prosecuting attorney, a representative from the insurance industry, a representative from the automobile industry, and one member of the general public.

WATPA Funding

The primary source of funding for WATPA is traffic infractions issued by local law enforcement and the Washington State Patrol across the state. Revenue is transmitted

monthly from this source to the Office of the Washington State Treasurer (statewide elective office) which deposits the funds into the WATPA dedicated fund account (a revolving account). In this regard, a surcharge of \$10 is assessed per traffic infraction issued anywhere in the State of Washington. Revenue from this fee is used to support the grant program for local government action combating auto theft, to support WATPA staff, and to support the work of the Public Awareness Coordinator for the Authority.

WATPA Grant Programs

WATPA's competitive grant process allocates funds to public agencies in Washington for the purpose of establishing, maintaining, and supporting programs that are designed to prevent motor vehicle theft. Such programs and activities include:

- Effective law enforcement investigation/enforcement/prosecution programs.
- Prevention/public awareness/community education projects.
- Equipment/technology related to auto theft prevention and reduction.
- Training directly related to motor vehicle theft initiatives.

Funding priorities include:

1. Strong multi-jurisdictional collaboration and sharing of resources.
2. Original and innovative projects.
3. Future sustainability.
4. Identified high priority motor vehicle theft area of need.
5. Inclusion of local funding.

Grant awards issued by WATPA reflect terms of duration reflecting Washington State biennial funding periods (Biennium begins July 1 every odd-numbered year). Project grants are made for no more than two fiscal years, but awards may be for projects of less than two years in duration, ending no later than the biennium end date. The first round of funding was made available for Washington State fiscal year 2008-2009, which began July 1, 2008 and ends June 30, 2009. For fiscal year 2008-2009, WATPA approved 24 grant applications which provided \$4,435,500 in financial assistance to public agencies in Washington committed to reducing motor vehicle theft in the Evergreen State. The approved project grants funded a variety of local level activities in areas of the state where auto theft is a clear problem, including law enforcement investigation of auto theft reports, the prosecution of auto theft crimes cleared by arrest, systematic crime analysis, the purchase of advanced technology and equipment, the confinement of offenders, and public awareness and education. WATPA funding is being used as well to initiate several multi-agency auto theft task forces across the state.

Agencies and individuals receiving WATPA grant funding are required to submit quarterly reports on program progress. WATPA reserves the right to revoke a grant award if clear and meaningful information on accomplishments is not received from the grant recipients in a timely manner. WATPA also conducts periodic financial and program audits to ensure that grant funds are being used appropriately and that meaningful intended outcomes are being achieved.

National Context Within Which WATPA Operates

The Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority is among 13 state and international auto theft prevention entities currently in existence. The U.S. states of Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Texas, Michigan, Maryland, Minnesota, New York, Rhode Island, Louisiana, and Virginia all have similar authorities in place. The nation of Australia also has an auto theft prevention body similar in form and function to that of WATPA.

The Michigan Automobile Theft Prevention Authority was the first such entity in the United States. Michigan lawmakers created their authority in the mid-1980s because at the time the state had the highest auto theft rate in the nation. The original authority was established with a sunset provision that automatically abolished the program unless it was renewed by an affirmative act of the Michigan State Legislature. The sunset provision was included to ensure the program, created as an experiment in law enforcement, was doing the job as intended. Due to a variety of successes attributed to the authority, the Michigan State Legislature enacted legislation establishing the Michigan Automobile Theft Prevention Authority as a permanent state agency in 1992 (Michigan Automobile Theft Prevention Authority, 2007). The Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority is the most recently developed auto theft authority in the U.S. The presence of several authorities allows these agencies to form associations and to learn from the successes and failures of other counterpart authorities. Several of the previously formed auto theft authorities have developed successful strategies to combat stolen motor vehicle crimes nationwide and worldwide.

For securing timely information on the operations of the Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority, and for directions on applying for WATPA grants, interested parties are directed to the following points of contact:

Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority
Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs
3060 Willamette Dr. NE
Lacey, WA 98516
Phone: 360-292-7900
Fax: 360-292-7969
Website: <http://watpa.waspc.org>

THE INTENT AND STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to determine the scope of the motor vehicle theft problem in Washington State. The report examines the areas of the state where the problem is most severe, and documents trends and levels of incidence of motor vehicle theft. An assessment of the estimated funds necessary to hire additional law enforcement personnel

to address the problem is made, in addition to an estimate of the added workload on prosecuting attorney offices from increased law enforcement personnel. Finally, this report conducts an analysis of promising motor vehicle theft initiatives implemented in other states, and makes recommendations to the Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority based on this analysis.

Methodology

Motor vehicle theft is a complex problem, consequently it is necessary to employ multiple methods of inquiry to gauge the extent of this problem. In order to examine the scale of the problem in our state, it is imperative to compare motor vehicle theft here to other regions across the nation. The Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) were analyzed to obtain comparative information regarding this crime, and National Crime Insurance Bureau reports were examined as well to provide information concerning the most common vehicles stolen and the rate of auto theft occurring in Metropolitan Statistical Areas across the U.S. National Crime Insurance Bureau data provided additional comparative information for examining motor vehicle theft in Washington State.

For information regarding the extent of the problem within the state of Washington, **Crime in Washington Reports** were accessed and analyzed. **Crime in Washington Reports** are compiled from data submitted by Washington local law enforcement agencies to the Washington Uniform Crime Reporting program of the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs. The data reported to WASPC cover 99.8% of the state population (**Crime in Washington Reports, 2007**). The Vehicle Record Management Unit of the Washington State Department of Licensing was contacted for information regarding the number of vehicles registered in Washington State in 2007. This information was used to analyze the levels of theft for the most commonly stolen vehicles in the state of Washington. While analyzing the extent of reported motor vehicle theft is imperative, law enforcement and prosecutor perceptions regarding motor vehicle theft are equally important.

A small-scale, on-line survey of law enforcement and prosecuting attorneys was conducted by the research team [survey questionnaires shown in Appendix A (Law enforcement) and Appendix B (prosecutors)]. The law enforcement survey was designed to gain a greater understanding of motor vehicle theft for separate jurisdictions, jurisdiction-specific methods for combating the motor vehicle theft problem, and law enforcement perceptions of promising initiatives used to combat motor vehicle theft in other states. The prosecutor survey was designed to ascertain how prosecutor offices are equipped to deal with motor vehicle theft, conviction rates and average sentence length, law enforcement/prosecutor relations when pursuing motor vehicle theft cases, and prosecutor perceptions of the best methods for dealing with the motor vehicle theft problem. Law enforcement and prosecutor answers will be compared in order to create a composite of the motor vehicle theft problem within the state of Washington, and insight into what are considered to be the best methods for addressing this issue by persons with direct experience with the problem in Washington.

In addition to looking at data on reported crimes and assessing the views of experts in the field, a research team at Washington State University secured data on auto theft offenders. Washington auto theft offender criminal history information was obtained through a request made to the Washington State Patrol. The criminal history data consists of a set of records on 127 total motor vehicle theft offenders; 85 of these adjudicated offenders were sentenced under the old law and 35 were sentenced under the newly created motor vehicle theft law referenced earlier. The prior system did not clearly separate offenders arrested for motor vehicle theft from those convicted of other property offenses. Under the new system, motor vehicle theft arrests are established as a distinct category under the general area of property offenses. Future annual reports to the Washington State Legislature made in compliance with Engrossed 3rd Substitute House Bill 1001 (The Elizabeth Nowak-Washington Auto Theft Prevention Act) will be able to utilize the new crime category to conduct more accurate composite profiles of auto theft offenders in Washington.

Finally, a review of auto theft authorities in other states was conducted by the aforementioned Washington State University researchers. The researchers in question included the following: Nicholas P. Lovrich, Director, Division of Governmental Studies and Services (DGSS); Michael J. Gaffney, Associate Director, DGSS; Christina Sanders, Research Coordinator and Westside Liaison, DGSS; Season Hoard, Doctoral Candidate in Political Science; and Yu-Sheng (Linus) Lin, Doctoral Candidate in Criminal Justice. The Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority is the newest such entity to be established in the nation. A review of reports, ongoing programs, and old and new initiatives employed by other authorities was conducted in order to provide suggestions regarding possible programs to be initiated within the state of Washington.

THE REPORT OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Problem Statement

National Problem

Motor vehicle theft remains a significant problem in the United States, notwithstanding some major advancements initiated in those states with auto theft prevention authorities. The FBI's 2007 Uniform Crime Report (UCR) indicates there were 1,095,769 motor vehicle thefts in the United States in 2007; this represents a rate of approximately 363.3 motor vehicles stolen for every 100,000 inhabitants of the country. Property losses due to motor vehicle theft in 2007 were estimated at \$7.4 billion, averaging \$6,755 per stolen vehicle. Automobiles comprised 73.4% of the motor vehicles reported stolen in 2007. The FBI data demonstrates that there has been a decline in motor vehicle theft since 2003; the 2007 Uniform Crime Report indicates that nationwide motor vehicle theft has decreased 8.1% over this period. Even though motor vehicle theft has declined for the fourth straight year across the nation, the problem of victimization by motor vehicle theft remains significant.

As depicted in Table 1, Washington ranks seventh among the states in the nation in total number of auto thefts per year.

Table 1: U.S. Auto Theft Top Ten States	
State	Number
1. California	219,392
2. Texas	93,899
3. Florida	73,656
4. Arizona	48,389
5. Georgia	42,594
6. Michigan	42,151
7. Washington	37,622
8. Illinois	33,887
9. Ohio	33,779
10. Maryland	28,393
United States Total	1,109,769
Source: National Insurance Crime Bureau, 2007	

The *National Crime Insurance Bureau* reviews data supplied by the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) for each of the nation’s 361 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). The Office of Management and Budget also designates MSAs; MSAs may include areas surrounding a specific city in addition to the core city in the area. Using 2006 U.S. Population Estimates, the most current figures available, auto theft rates are determined by the number of vehicle theft offenses reported per 100,000 inhabitants. Modesto, CA had the highest motor vehicle theft rate in the United States in 2007. Yakima, WA had the 9th highest auto theft rate in 2007 (NICB, 2007).

Table 2: Top Ten Metropolitan Areas with Highest Vehicle Theft Rates for 2007

1. Modesto, CA	1,047.99
2. Las Vegas/Paradise, NV	1,036.36
3. San Diego/Carlsbad/San Marcos, CA	943.71
4. Stockton, CA	841.89
5. San Francisco/Oakland/Fremont, CA	832.47
6. Laredo, TX	820.92
7. Albuquerque, NM	819.64
8. Phoenix/Mesa/Scottsdale, AZ	817.86
9. Yakima, WA	814.38
10. Tucson, AZ	804.58

Source: National Insurance Crime Bureau

Washington Problem

While motor vehicle theft is clearly a serious nationwide problem, the problem is staggering in the state of Washington. In 2007, a total of 37,622 vehicles were stolen; this represents a rate of 581.6 vehicles stolen for every 100,000 inhabitants (UCR by State, 2007). The economic loss of locally stolen vehicles in Washington was over \$180 million (Crime in Washington Reports, 2007). According to the National Insurance Crime Bureau, Washington ranked 7th among the states of the nation for total motor vehicle thefts in 2007. Moreover, the City of Yakima ranked 9th among urban areas in the nation for motor vehicle theft rates in 2007. Seattle and Spokane were among the *top 25* cities for highest vehicle theft rates (National Crime Insurance Bureau, 2007).

Consistent with UCR national data, motor vehicle theft has decreased in Washington for the past two years. The total number of motor vehicle thefts for 2007 was 37,622, an 18 percent decrease from 2006 (UCR by State, 2007); however, the State of Washington ranks 5th among the nation for motor vehicle theft rates (i.e., risk of auto theft victimization). In Washington, motor vehicle theft has decreased in all major cities with populations of 100,000 or more, with the exception of Vancouver (Clark County) in

southwestern Washington which has experienced an increase in motor vehicle theft. Overall, auto theft makes up about 14 percent of all property crimes in Washington, but it accounts for approximately 50 percent of the value of all property stolen in the state (Crime in Washington Reports, 2007).

Overview of Motor Vehicle Theft in Washington

Types/Number of Vehicles Most Commonly Targeted

Of the types of vehicles reported stolen in Washington, 83.5% are cars, 11.3% are trucks and buses, and 5.2% are other types of vehicles (Crime in Washington Reports, 2007). Table 3 lists the top ten vehicles stolen in Washington in 2007, by make and model, according to the National Crime Insurance Bureau. Table 4 lists the top twenty stolen vehicles in Washington in 2007 according to Washington Crime Information Center (WACIC) data.

Table 3: Top 10 Vehicles Stolen in Washington by Make and Model for 2007	
Make and Model	
1.	1992 Honda Accord
2.	1995 Honda Civic
3.	1989 Toyota Camry
4.	1994 Acura Integra
5.	1993 Saturn SL
6.	1994 Nissan Sentra
7.	1988 Toyota Pickup
8.	1995 Nissan Pathfinder
9.	1993 Subaru Legacy
10.	1994 Jeep Cherokee/Grand Cherokee
Source: National Crime Insurance Bureau	

Table 4: Top Twenty Stolen Vehicles in Washington	
Make and Model	
1.	1992 Honda Accord
2.	1991 Honda Accord
3.	1990 Honda Accord
4.	1993 Honda Accord
5.	1994 Honda Accord
6.	1995 Honda Civic
7.	1993 Honda Civic
8.	1996 Honda Accord
9.	1995 Honda Accord
10.	1989 Toyota Camry
11.	1990 Toyota Camry
12.	1997 Honda Accord
13.	1998 Honda Civic
14.	1994 Honda Civic
15.	1997 Honda Civic
16.	2000 Honda Civic
17.	1991 Toyota Camry
18.	1991 Honda Civic
19.	1988 Toyota Camry
20.	1992 Honda Civic
Source: Washington Crime Information Center, 2007	

In 2007, the Washington State Vehicle Record Management Unit reported that 6,734,980 vehicles were registered in the state, of which 4,031,655 were passenger vehicles. A total of 140,222 of the top 20 most stolen vehicles in Washington are registered in the state. The top 20 most stolen vehicles represent over one-in-five of all vehicles registered within the state, and approximately 35% of registered passenger vehicles. This constitutes a very large pool of potential targets of auto theft.

Extent of Motor Vehicle Theft

Table 5 illustrates the number of auto thefts reported to the police in 2007, 2006 and 2005 for each city in Washington with a population over 100,000. As illustrated in the table, all of the Washington cities with the exception of Vancouver have experienced a modest decrease in motor vehicle theft from 2006 to 2007.

Table 5: Number of Reported Auto Thefts in Washington Cities with over a 100,000 Population			
Agency	2007	2006	2005
Bellevue PD	446	476	567
Everett PD	1,878	2,243	2,065
Seattle PD	5,782	8,147	9,563
Spokane	2,013	2,299	1,802
Tacoma PD	3,211	3,601	3,558
Vancouver PD	971	942	1,152

Source: Crime in Washington Report, 2005, 2006, 2007

Table 6 presents the number of reported auto thefts in 2007, 2006, and 2005 for each city in Washington with a population ranging from 50,000 to 100,000. All of the cities have experienced a modest decrease in auto theft from 2006 to 2007.

Table 6: Number of Reported Auto Thefts in Washington Cities with 50,000 to 100,000 Population			
Agency	2007	2006	2005
Bellingham PD	239	276	309
Federal Way PD	939	1,199	1,573
Kennewick PD	159	174	217
Kent PD	1,008	1,563	1,474
Renton PD	431	961	983
Shoreline PD	201	441	528
Spokane Valley PD	413	678	563
Yakima PD	844	1,003	1,060

Source: Crime in Washington Report, 2005, 2006, 2007

Table 7 presents the Washington Counties with the highest number of reported motor vehicle thefts for 2007, and for 2006 for cross-time comparison. There is a clear link between population and motor vehicle thefts, as expected. The counties with the largest populations – namely, King, Pierce, Snohomish, Spokane, and Yakima – are the top five counties in Washington for reported motor vehicle thefts. With the exception of both Thurston County (Olympia/Lacey area) and Clark County (Vancouver area), all the top ten counties have experienced a modest decrease in the number of motor vehicle thefts from 2006 to 2007.

Table 7: Washington Counties with the Highest Number of Reported Motor Vehicle Thefts			
County	Number of Auto Thefts		
	2007	2006	
1. King	13,979	18,806	
2. Pierce	6,542	7,067	
3. Snohomish	4,973	6,148	
4. Spokane	2,742	3,290	
5. Yakima	1,871	2,176	
6. Clark	1,640	1,612	
7. Thurston	747	684	
8. Skagit	480	529	
9. Whatcom	436	518	
10. Kitsap	380	601	

Source: Crime in Washington Report, 2006, 2007

Recovery Rate: Location and Identification of Stolen Vehicles

While a large majority of vehicle thefts reported to the police do not result in an arrest, a substantial majority of stolen vehicles are indeed recovered. The recovery rate in Washington has been above 67 percent since 2002. In contrast, the national recovery rate in 2006 was 63 percent (Crime in the United States Reports, 2002-2006).

Table 8: Washington Recovery Rates 2002-2006					
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Number of Auto Thefts	37,422	37,410	39,938	45,847	42,526
Stolen locally/Recovered locally	15,786	15,687	18,289	20,685	19,591
Stolen locally/Recovered Elsewhere	9,815	9,421	9,389	11,094	10,523
Total locally stolen/Recovered	25,601	25,108	27,678	31,779	30,174
Stolen in other Jurisdictions/Recovered Locally	6,831	6,770	7,059	8,041	7,201
Recovery Rate	68.41%	67.12%	69.30%	69.32%	70.95%

Source: Crime in Washington Report 2002-2006

Clearance Rate

In the UCR statistics, a clearance by arrest is recorded when at least one person has been arrested, charged with the commission of the offense by a prosecutor, and turned over to the court for adjudication. A clearance “by exceptional means” is recorded when an agency has identified the offender, gathered enough evidence to support an arrest, and turned over the offender to the court for adjudication, but circumstances outside of law enforcement control prohibits the agency from arresting, charging, and prosecuting offender (UCR, 2007). The total clearance rate for Washington was 8.92% in 2006. The National Clearance rate, in contrast, is typically around 13 percent.

Table 9: Washington Clearance Rates 2002-2006

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Number of Auto Thefts	37,422	37,410	39,938	45,847	42,526
Number Cleared	3723	4086	3857	4290	3792
Percent Cleared	9.95%	10.92%	9.66%	9.36%	8.92%

Source: Crime in Washington Reports, 2002-2006

Table 10: National Clearance Rates 2002-2006

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Number of Offenses	1,246,646	1,261,226	1,237,851	1,235,226	1,192,809
Percent Cleared	13.80%	13.10%	13.00%	13.00%	12.60%

Source: Crime in the United States Reports, 2002-2006

Auto Theft Offenders: Criminal History Profile

Auto theft offender criminal history data were obtained through a request filed with the Washington State Patrol by the Washington State University research team, with the support of the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs and the Executive Director of WATPA. The data provided pursuant to this request consists of a set of 127 total motor vehicle theft offenders; 85 of these offenders were sentenced under the old property crime statute and 35 were sentenced under the newly created motor vehicle theft laws described above featuring enhanced penalties. The prior system did not clearly separate offenders arrested for motor vehicle theft from those convicted of other property offenses. Under the new statutory system, motor vehicle theft arrests will be in a distinct category under property offenses. Future reports will be able to utilize the new offense classification system to conduct more accurate composites of Washington State auto theft offenders.

According to the criminal history data provided by Washington State Patrol, a large majority of motor vehicle theft offenders are white males between the ages of 15 and 27. Of these offenders, only 2.84% of the arrests entailed guns or firearms, and only 9.93% were drug-related. While the majority of arrests were not gun-related or drug-related, 39.86% of first-time auto theft offenders had a drug offense in their criminal history

background (either before or after their motor vehicle theft arrest). For multiple auto theft offenders, this percentage of prior or subsequent drug offenses increases to 60.26%. There is clearly a drug nexus to auto theft, as many law enforcement and prosecutors working in this area attest, particularly with respect to repeat offenders.

Motor Vehicle Theft Legislation: Federal and Washington State Legislative Enactments of Consequence

Federal Legislation (Source: SmartMotorist, 2007)

1919: *Dyer Act* (National Motor Vehicle Theft Act)

- Made interstate transportation of stolen vehicles a federal crime
- Imposed harsh sentences (fines and up to 10 years imprisonment) on those who transported stolen vehicles across state lines.

1969: Congress establishes the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in the mid 1960's; NHTSA issues Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 115.

- Required all road-going motor vehicles to have a vehicle identification number (VIN).
- After January 1st 1980, all VIN generators were required to use a uniform 17-character format.

1984: Congress enacts the Motor Vehicle Theft Law Enforcement Act

- Provided criminal penalties for altering or removing motor vehicle identification numbers.
- Allowed for seizure and forfeiture of vehicles or components with falsified or removed identification numbers.
- Brought interstate trafficking in stolen vehicles and parts under federal racketeering statutes (RICO) and imposed heavy fines and prison terms for export violations.
- The Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984 made it a federal offense to counterfeit or forge motor vehicle title certificates or forge motor vehicle title certificates.

1992: The Anti-Car Theft Act

- Made armed auto theft (carjacking) a federal crime.
- Created a new offense making it a crime to own, operate, maintain, or control a chop shop.
- Provided funding to link all state motor vehicle departments.
- Required DMV's to check VINS of out-of-state cars before issuing titles to new owners.

- Required auto recyclers and repair shops that sell or install used parts to check VINS against FBI's stolen-car database.
- Required Customs officials to perform spot checks of cars and containers leaving the country, and began a pilot program of x-raying containers to prevent export of stolen vehicles.
- Required insurers to certify salvaged or junked vehicles they sold are not stolen.
- Established a grant program for state and local anti-car theft committees funded by car taxes or fees.

1994: The Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Act (part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994).

- Required Attorney General to develop, in cooperation with the states, a national voluntary motor vehicle theft prevention program, in which a car's owner could sign a consent form authorizing law enforcement officers to stop the car if it were being operated under certain conditions (late at night, in certain urban neighborhoods, etc).
- Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act made carjacking resulting in death a federal crime punishable by death.

1996: Anti-Car Theft Improvements Act of 1996

- Upgraded state motor-vehicle department databases containing title information, enabling federal and state law enforcement to determine theft status.
- Granted limited immunity from civil liability to the providers of titling information and those who aid law enforcement.

Washington Motor Vehicle Legislation

In response to a serious motor vehicle theft problem within the state, Washington State lawmakers enacted the Elizabeth Nowak-Washington Auto Theft Prevention Act in 2007. Among other things, the act was designed to combat the problem of motor vehicle theft through the enactment of harsher punishments. In addition to creating WATPA, the statute resulting from Engrossed 3rd Substitute House Bill 1001 does the following: 1) increases auto theft-related penalties and triple scores prior offenses for adult offenders; 2) counts prior vehicle prowling offenses as prior convictions when calculating an offender's sentence; and 3) requires mandatory minimum penalties for any juvenile adjudicated of an auto theft-related offense (and requires evaluation and treatment at sentencing). The Elizabeth Nowak-Washington Auto Theft Prevention Act also makes possession of auto theft tools a gross misdemeanor offense.

Under Washington Penal code 9A.56.063, "a person is guilty of theft of a motor vehicle if he or she commits theft of a motor vehicle" regardless of the value amount of the vehicle. Theft of a motor vehicle in the state of Washington is now a class B felony. Possession of a stolen motor vehicle is also a class B felony. For a class B felony, a first-time adult offender has a standard sentence range of zero to 90 days in jail. More specifically, 9A.56.070 defines the crime of taking a motor vehicle without permission in the first degree. The statute states that "a person is guilty of taking a motor vehicle

without permission in the first degree if he or she, without permission of the owner or person entitled to possession, intentionally takes or drives away an automobile or motor vehicle, whether propelled by steam, electricity, or internal combustion engine, that is the property of another.” A person is also guilty of taking a motor vehicle without permission in the first degree if they alter the motor vehicle for the purpose of changing its appearance or primary identification, removes or participates in the removal of parts from the motor vehicle with the intent to sell parts, exports or attempts to export the motor vehicle across state lines or out of the United States for profit, intends to sell the motor vehicle, engages in a conspiracy where the primary purpose is motor vehicle theft for sale to others for profit, or engages in a conspiracy and has solicited a juvenile to participate in the theft of a motor vehicle.

The Engrossed 3rd Substitute House Bill 1001 establishes mandatory minimum sentencing terms for juveniles adjudicated of an offense that either involves theft of a motor vehicle or involves possession of a stolen motor vehicle. Juveniles with no prior adjudications must be sentenced to a minimum five days home detention and 45 hours community restitution, or no home detention and 90 hours of community restitution. A juvenile with one prior adjudication on their record must be sentenced to a minimum of 10 days of detention, 90 hours of community service, and payment of a \$400 fine. A juvenile with two or more prior adjudications must serve a minimum of 15-36 weeks of confinement, seven days of home detention, four months of community release under supervision, 90 hours community service, and payment of a \$400 fine.

The Drug Offender Sentencing Alternative (DOSA)

The Drug Offender Sentencing Alternative (DOSA) is an alternative sentencing program that allows a court to waive an offender’s sentence within the standard sentencing range. If in the view of the court a DOSA sentence is appropriate for an offender, the judge may impose an alternative sentence that includes confinement in a state facility for one-half of the midpoint of the standard sentencing range. While the offender is in confinement, they must complete a substance abuse assessment and receive, within available resources, appropriate treatment and counseling. Following this period of incarceration, the offender must spend the remainder of the midpoint of the standard sentencing range under supervision in community custody. Community custody must include some form of alcohol and substance abuse treatment which has been approved by the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (DASA) of the Washington Department of Social and Health Services. Offenders sentenced under DOSA may also be required to adhere to crime-related prohibitions and a range of affirmative conditions as part of their sentence, and pay a \$30 per month fee while they are serving community custody to offset the cost of the monitoring of their behavior.

DOSA Eligibility:

- Convicted of a felony that is not a sex offense or violent offense and the violation does not involve a sentence enhancement;
- Has no current or prior convictions for a sex offense;

- Has no current or prior convictions for a violent offense;
- Would receive a standard sentence range for the current offense which is greater than one year;
- Is not subject to a deportation detainer or order; and
- Has committed a Violation of the Uniform Controlled Substance Act (VUSCA) where the offense involves only a small quantity of drugs as determined by the court.

A residential treatment DOSA program also exists. Courts have the option to sentence a nonviolent offender with a substance abuse addiction to either the current incarceration-based DOSA or the new residential chemical dependency treatment-based alternative.

Additional DOSA Eligibility Requirements for both DOSA programs

- Must not have been convicted of a violent offense in the last 10 years;
- Cannot have been convicted of a sex offense;
- The standard sentence range for the current offense is greater than one year for the offense the offender is charged with; and
- The offender has not received a DOSA sentence more than once in the prior ten years before the current offense.

Auto Theft Prevention Programs Utilized in Other States

Public Service Announcements/ Public Awareness Campaigns

The Pennsylvania, Texas, Arizona, and Illinois auto theft prevention authorities all utilize a small portion of their funds to promote public awareness of the motor vehicle theft problem. While the amount allocated to public service announcements varies between authorities, PSA funding typically ranges from 2 to 10 percent of available funds. The public service announcements are designed to help prevent motor vehicle theft by educating citizens about motor vehicle theft, and reminding people to hide their belongings, take their keys, and lock their car upon leaving their vehicles. In their public awareness programs, the Arizona Automobile Theft Authority has emphasized the importance of multiple layers of protection: removing keys from the ignition and locking the doors and closing windows; utilizing warning devices, such as audible alarms and steering wheel locks; immobilizing devices, and installing tracking devices (AATA, 2004).

Youth Prevention Programs

The Arizona Automobile Theft Authority (AATA) offers a middle school educational program designed to stress the consequences of involvement in auto theft. The program emphasizes the effects on friends, family, and the community of auto theft victimization.

The curriculum materials include a video, a facilitator's guide, both pre- and post-presentation questionnaires, and professionally prepared theft prevention brochures (AATA, 2007). Schools wishing to participate in the program can contact the AATA for materials. States with a high incidence of juveniles participating in motor vehicle theft may consider similar youth prevention programs. Unfortunately, to date the Arizona authority has not conducted any type of evaluation study to assess the degree of success which could be ascribed to their youth auto theft prevention programs.

Vehicle Registration Programs

Both Texas and Arizona utilize voluntary, state-wide vehicle registration programs to combat motor vehicle theft. Vehicle registration programs are designed to be both a theft deterrent and aid in the recovery of a stolen vehicle. Vehicle owners can voluntarily register their cars through the authority or participating law enforcement agency. By signing up for the program, vehicle owners agree that law enforcement officials may stop and check the vehicle between the hours of 1:00am and 5:00am to verify ownership. Registered owners are given decals to place in the windshields of the vehicle which notifies officers of the owner's participation in the program. Vehicle registration programs are not utilized by every state authority; some states have found the costs to be prohibitive. Texas has estimated the annual cost of their "Help End Auto Theft" program to be approximately \$100,000; the program is part of the Texas Automobile Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority's administrative budget. Effectiveness of vehicle registration programs are typically measured by program enrollments. To date, neither Texas nor Arizona have conducted any type of systematic study to assess the effectiveness of these programs in terms of outcomes.

Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) Etching

VIN etching programs entail etching the VIN number of a motor vehicle on all prominent glass surfaces of the vehicle. VIN etching provides a deterrent to auto theft because it is difficult to replace all the glass in the vehicle; VIN etching also aids in the recovery of stolen vehicles. The majority of state automobile theft prevention authorities provide some form of support for VIN etching. In Texas, Arizona, and Pennsylvania, VIN etching is typically done by participating law enforcement agencies during community events, or by law enforcement agencies policing in high theft areas. Pennsylvania offers an at-home VIN etching kit for citizens unable to attend free VIN etching events in their communities. The state of Texas provides a warning label to drivers stating that the vehicle has been etched.

Law Enforcement Strategies

Bait Cars

Bait cars are utilized by many law enforcement agencies to tackle the motor vehicle theft problem. While bait cars are often regarded as highly successful for combating vehicle

theft, several auto theft prevention authorities have experienced mixed results with the use of bait cars. Arizona, Texas, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and Illinois authorities have all experienced mixed results for bait cars, and they have reported those mixed results in their respective annual reports. Explanations for the mixed results vary, however; it is important to realize that bait cars are higher effective in some settings and not so effective in others. While they may be highly effective in one jurisdiction, they are nonetheless just one strategy for dealing with motor vehicle theft. The motor vehicle theft problem to be managed effectively must entail the utilization of a variety of methods; relying on bait cars alone will not address the motor vehicle theft problem successfully.

License Plate Readers

License plate readers (both fixed location and mobile, car mounted) are also utilized by a large number of law enforcement agencies across the country and in Canada. License plate readers generally illuminate a vehicle license plate and take a digital picture using a high speed camera. Data mining software then analyzes the photograph of the plate and compares the plate image with an updated database of stolen license plates. While many local law enforcement agencies are making use of license plate readers in combating motor vehicle theft, the theft prevention authorities in some states have reported somewhat mixed results with license plate readers. The Minnesota, Illinois, and Arizona authorities have reported such mixed results with the use of license plate readers with respect to the accuracy of the scanning cameras and the reliability of the plate recognition to database entry matching process that occurs in the computer element of the system. The Arizona auto theft authority has attributed the mixed results they have experienced to the varying combinations of technology (compatibility issues) used by departments. Whatever the reason for the mixed results, it is important to keep well in mind that license plate readers, as is the case with bait cars, represent just one possible method for dealing with the problem of motor vehicle theft.

Vehicle Theft Multi-Agency Task Forces

Other states have recognized the importance of multi-agency task forces to reduce auto theft. In 2007, the Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council provided funding to six multi-agency law enforcement task forces (Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council, 2007). Evaluations of these task forces have been promising; effectiveness is measured in the number of vehicles recovered, arrests made, as well as other agency activities concerning vehicle theft related crimes. Task forces in Arizona and Illinois have been regarded as highly successful in combating the motor vehicle theft problem.

Survey Results: Viewing the Problem from the Vantage Point of Law Enforcement and Prosecutors

In an attempt to secure a picture of how the problem of auto theft is viewed at the local level across the state a list of law enforcement personnel who are particularly active in

the auto theft arena was provided to the Washington State University team conducting the field research for this report. In addition, the 39 county prosecuting attorneys were also surveyed to collect their views on the problem as well. The method of contact was that of an on-line survey, employed to keep the cost of data collection to an absolute minimum. The survey instruments were adapted to the state of Washington setting from similar surveys administered in other states by their respective auto theft prevention authorities. [The survey instruments appear as Appendix A and Appendix B for law enforcement personnel and county prosecutors, respectively.]

The principal findings to emerge from the surveys are reported in Table 11, which sets forth the views of both law enforcement and prosecutors on the relative effectiveness the following countermeasures used to combat auto theft across the country:

1. Law enforcement personnel dedicated to auto theft issues.
2. Prosecutors dedicated to auto theft issues.
3. Community programs, such as etching vehicle glass.
4. Public awareness campaigns.
5. Insurance company investigators.
6. Inspection of businesses for stolen vehicles/parts.
7. Training of law enforcement personnel.
8. Training of prosecutors and judges.
9. Multi-jurisdictional task force with police and prosecutorial personnel.

The law enforcement personnel and the prosecutors were asked to indicate what percentage of WATPA grant funds should be allocated to each countermeasure, and what degree of impact in the form of auto theft reduction such an allocation might produce. The wording on the survey items in question read as follows:

The following two questions list nine approaches used in other states to reduce auto theft. Assume that you have a \$10 million budget for auto theft programs for Washington. In the first question, please indicate what you think is the optimal allocation of money across the nine methods. In the spaces provided, allocate 100% of these funds for auto theft programs across the nine methods. If there is an additional approach not listed that you think is effective, you may write it in the space provided. Please make certain the column adds up to 100%. For the second question, please indicate what percentage decrease in auto theft you estimate would result from this amount being allocated to each method.

Table 11 summarizes the results from the surveys collected from 21 “key actors” (an almost equal number of law enforcement and prosecutorial personnel) with respect to how the state’s resources should be allocated across these nine countermeasures to auto theft. The survey also resulted in the collection of survey comments, and those are reported here in abbreviated form in Appendix D to the report.

Table 11: Relative Preferences of Auto Theft Countermeasures for Washington Law Enforcement and Prosecutors

	Mean % Allocations	
	Law enforcement	Prosecutors
Law enforcement personnel dedicated to auto theft issues	21.88	42.22
Prosecutors dedicated to auto theft issues	14.38	18.33
Community programs, such as etching vehicle glass	2.63	2.86
Public awareness campaigns	7.00	7.43
Insurance company investigators	3.25	1.00
Inspection of businesses for stolen vehicles/parts	3.38	3.57
Training of law enforcement personnel	5.00	5.57
Training of prosecutors and judges	5.00	3.86
Multi-jurisdictional task force with law enforcement and prosecutorial personnel	32.50	17.43

The top three areas of preferred investment are the same for law enforcement key actors and prosecutorial key actors alike: 1) more dedicated investigators; 2) multi-jurisdictional task forces; and 3) more dedicated prosecutors. Another item on the survey filled out by these key actors asked them to indicate their assessment of the level of effectiveness of each of these areas of resource investment. Approximately two out of three of the survey respondents assessed each of these three areas of possible WATPA investment as being either “effective” or “very effective” countermeasures against auto theft.

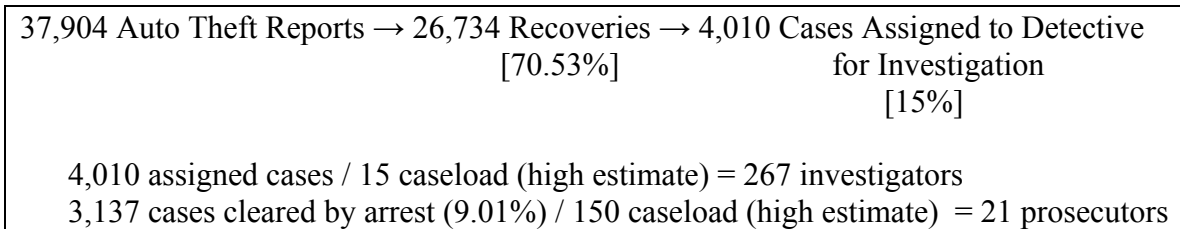
From these findings it is apparent that WATPA’s grant program is responding well to the expressed preferences of the criminal justice system actors who are most knowledgeable and experienced in combating auto theft.

Estimation of Resources Needed to Properly Address All Reports of Auto Thefts in Washington

One important task set out for this report was the estimation of the cost of investigative and prosecutorial resources necessary to responsibly address – i.e., investigate where evidence exists to pursue an investigation, and charge and prosecute when a clearance by arrest is achieved – all reported auto thefts in Washington. Using the data available for 2007, and basing estimates on conversations held with prosecutors and law enforcement who are experienced and knowledgeable about recovery rates, clearance rates, standard investigator workloads and standard prosecutorial caseloads, it is possible to provide such an estimate (with conservative assumptions) for investigative and prosecutorial resources. Using cost figures submitted in the first round of funding applications for investigator

salaries and benefits and prosecutor salaries and benefits, a reasonable estimate of total costs can be postulated.

The following flow chart indicates the estimation parameters employed to come to the estimate based on **2007 figures** for auto theft reports, recoveries and clearances.



267 Investigators @ \$90,000/year = \$24,030,000
21 deputy prosecutors @ \$115,000/ year = \$2,415,000
<hr/> Total Cost Estimate = \$26,445,000

Note: This figure **does NOT include** the costs associated with crime analysts, investigator and prosecutor supervisors, and support staff/materials/computers and related expenses

The following section reviews the major findings set forth in this report.

Principal Findings

- In 2007, the Uniform Crime Reports documented 37,904 reported or known motor vehicle thefts; this represents a rate of over 580 vehicles stolen for every 100,000 state inhabitants. The national rate for 2007 was 363.3 motor vehicles stolen for every 100,000 inhabitants. According to the Crime in Washington Reports, the economic loss of locally stolen vehicles in Washington was over \$180 million.
- While motor vehicle theft has decreased in Washington State since 2002, Washington still ranks 7th among the nation for total cars stolen per year. According to the National Insurance Crime Bureau, the Yakima metropolitan area was 9th in the country for motor vehicle theft rates per 100,000 residents. Seattle and Spokane were among the top 25 metropolitan areas for motor vehicle theft.
- King, Pierce, Snohomish, Spokane, and Yakima are the top five counties in Washington for reported motor vehicle thefts. With the exception of Thurston and Clark counties, all the top ten counties have experienced a decrease in the number of motor vehicle thefts from 2006 to 2007.

- The majority of Washington cities with a population of 100,000 or more have experienced a modest decrease in motor vehicle theft from 2006 to 2007; however, Vancouver has experienced an increase during this period.
- According to Crime in Washington Reports, overall, auto theft makes up about 14 percent of all property crimes in Washington, but it accounts for about 50 percent of the value of stolen property in the state (Crime in Washington Reports, 2007).
- According to the National Insurance Crime Bureau, the top 5 stolen vehicles in Washington are the Honda Accord, Honda Civic, Toyota Camry, Acura Integra, and the Saturn SL. Many of these makes and models are registered to residents of Washington.
- The recovery rate in Washington has been consistently above 67 percent since 2002. In contrast, the national recovery rate in 2005 was 63 percent.
- The clearance rate for Washington was 8.92% in 2006. The National Clearance rate is typically around 13 percent. This gap suggests that there is a need for greater investigative and prosecutorial attention to the clearance of auto theft crimes. It is estimated that an expenditure of more than \$26 million would be required to attend to all of the actionable cases of auto theft which occurred in 2007. This is a **conservative estimate** based on heavy investigator caseload and prosecutor caseload assumptions, and does not include crime analyst and position support costs.
- According to the Washington State Patrol criminal history data, the majority of motor vehicle theft offenders in Washington were youthful white males between the ages of 15 and 27. The majority of arrests were neither gun-related nor drug-related; however, nearly 40% of first-time auto theft offenders had a drug offense on their criminal history record. For multiple auto theft offenders (2+ offenses), this percentage increases to greater than 60%.

Recommendations

This report concludes with the listing of seven recommendations. Those are as follows:

1. As was noted in various locations in this report, evidence on program impact which is collected in program evaluations is considerably lacking in the other state authorities. Most authorities require that some form of evaluation be done by recipients of their grants and service contracts; however, these evaluations universally do not measure impact and outcomes of individual programs supported with authority funds. Enrollment in programs is only one aspect of success; program evaluation needs to consider impact and the results of impact assessments should be broadly shared across the auto theft authorities. The state of Washington has a strong reputation for program and general government

innovation and accountability alike. The Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority can add to this reputation and aid its board members and those of other states combating auto theft by systematically evaluating the impact and outcomes of the programs implemented by the authority. Fortunately, documenting outcomes as well as accounting for supported activities and expenditures supported by grant funding is required by WATPA as part of its grant monitoring work. This is certainly a good start, inasmuch as systematic assessment and follow-up work constitutes a good investment for WATPA as it moves beyond start-up into its maturity as a public entity.

2. While the lack of access to systematic program evaluation studies for favorable outcomes attained in other states makes suggesting possible programs for the state of Washington difficult, a VIN etching program is more broadly available in most states than in Washington. The majority of auto theft prevention authorities provide free VIN etching to the public. Free VIN etching can provide a cost-effective means for preventing automobile theft. Charging for VIN etching may deter those most likely to be targeted by auto thieves, those driving older vehicles, from participating in an effective means of combating motor vehicle theft.
3. The WATPA website offers an opportunity for improvement. The Pennsylvania Auto Theft Prevention Authority's website offers an example of a visually stimulating website designed to peak citizen interest. The website offers helpful tips, information about auto theft myths, county statistics, and an interactive game for website users. The WATPA website would benefit from utilizing some of Pennsylvania's website innovations. Updating the WATPA website could encourage citizens to peruse the website, and offer a fun way for citizens to learn about automobile theft. The respondents to the survey express very positive views of the WATPA website, which indicates that it was designed more for "insiders" in the auto theft community than for the citizen seeking information and/or engagement.
4. Citizen awareness is an important tool for combating auto theft. Updating the website is just one method of increasing citizen awareness; WATPA should consider increasing citizen awareness through the use of public awareness campaigns and public service announcements. Public awareness campaigns and public service announcements will also increase citizen knowledge of WATPA and its activities, which can encourage people to access the WATPA website for acquiring additional information. The WATPA Public Awareness Coordinator is encouraged to pursue this avenue of outreach more aggressively.
5. Increasing inter-agency cooperation is another effective means for combating motor vehicle theft. As mentioned previously, multi-agency task forces have been highly successful in combating motor vehicle theft in high-incident areas. The King County Car Theft Initiative and the Auto Theft Tactical Analysis Center of

King County (ATTACK) provides a local example of highly successful inter-agency cooperation in targeting motor vehicle theft. When possible, law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and judges within geographic areas should be encouraged to work together to combat the problem of auto theft. WATPA is well on its way to encouraging more inter-agency cooperation; 2008- 2009 funding as already been allocated to several multi-agency task forces which plan to utilize inter-agency cooperation to combat auto theft. The survey of law enforcement and prosecutorial “key actors” clearly indicated that multi-agency task forces within which genuine collaboration and information sharing occur are seen as very important mechanisms for combating auto theft.

6. In order to combat motor vehicle theft in our state successfully it is clear that additional personnel are essential. While exact figures vary, the large majority of other state authority’s funds are allocated to personnel, with the majority of those personnel being law enforcement. In Illinois, 78 percent of 1992-2007 funding was allocated to personnel, while 7 percent was designated for equipment (Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council, 2007). As mentioned elsewhere in this first annual report, equipment such as bait cars and license plate readers are just one method of combating auto theft; the infusion of additional prosecutorial and investigative personnel to combat motor vehicle theft is very important. WATPA 2008-2009 funding allocations are comparable to other state authorities; a large majority has been allocated to increasing key personnel, an essential step in combating motor vehicle theft in our state where the ratios of police and prosecutors to population have been low in comparison to other areas of the country.

7. Crime statistics suggest that although motor vehicle theft is decreasing modestly in the state of Washington, auto theft continues to be a significant problem. States with auto theft prevention authorities have recorded significant results in combating auto theft. WATPA can help provide law enforcement and prosecutors with some of the tools (e.g., bait cars with cameras and ALPRS) they need to combat motor vehicle theft in this state. But in addition to the technology and personnel, WATPA can utilize public awareness campaigns and provide prevention programs to combat auto theft through the co-production of public order via coordinated citizen action.

Appendix A

Law Enforcement Survey

On-line Survey of Auto Theft Investigators

Instructions and Invitation to Participate in Voluntary, Confidential Survey

The *Division of Governmental Studies and Services* at *Washington State University* is conducting this survey among the auto theft prevention community. Researchers with the division have been contracted by the *Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority* (WATPA) to assess the problem of motor vehicle theft in Washington State, and to evaluate programs WATPA has developed for addressing the issue in our state during its initial years of existence. The research team is composed of two public administration faculty members, one criminal justice doctoral student, and one political science doctoral student.

The survey will take you about 30 minutes to fill out. Your participation in the survey is completely voluntary, and you can skip over any particular questions you do not wish to answer. You may discontinue participation in the survey at any point. We strongly encourage you to take part in the survey, however, so that we can do the best possible job of assessing the problem of motor vehicle theft in the State of Washington and a good job of offering well-grounded program suggestions for WATPA.

If you have any questions concerning the survey, please contact Professor Nicholas Lovrich at WSU in Pullman (509) 335-4811. You are assured that all survey responses will remain confidential and that only aggregate survey results will be reported to WATPA and in public reports. This survey meets all the requirements for the protection of respondent privacy and confidentiality.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Nicholas Lovrich

Director

Michael Gaffney

Associate Director

DIVISION OF GOVERNMENTAL STUDIES AND SERVICES
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

1. In your jurisdiction, how significant are the following problems?

	Significant	Moderately significant	Not significant	Not Sure
Motor Vehicle Theft	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Motor Vehicle Burglary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Car Jacking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Auto Theft Insurance Fraud	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Failure to Return Rental Cars	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Does your jurisdiction have a special agency to deal with motor vehicle theft?
 ___ Yes ___ No

3. We are interested in understanding the reasons for motor vehicle theft in your jurisdiction. In your experience, how are vehicles stolen in your jurisdiction.

___% Hot-wired	___% Key in/on Vehicle
___% Cracked Steering Column	___% Keys Stolen
___% Towed/Carried	___% Manipulation Key

4. We are also interested in understanding the techniques used to steal vehicles in your jurisdiction. In your experience, what are the reasons for motor vehicle theft in your jurisdiction?

___% Joyriding
___% Commission of a crime
___% Sell
___% Parts
___% Insurance Fraud
___% Trade for Drugs
___% Exportation to Other Countries
___% Smuggling
___% Human
___% Narcotics

5. What is the approximate **recovery rate** for stolen motor vehicles in your jurisdiction?
 _____%

6. In what **condition** were the vehicles pertaining to the prior question recovered?

___% Vehicle found in good condition
___% Vehicle found disassembled
___% Vehicle found destroyed
___% Vehicle never found
___% Other explain _____

7. The approximate **clearance rate** for stolen vehicles in your jurisdiction is: _____%

8. When do vehicles tend to be stolen in your jurisdiction?

_____% 12:01am – 6:00am _____% 12:01pm – 6:00pm
_____% 6:01am – 12:00pm _____% 6:01am – 12:00am

9. From what locations do vehicles tend to be stolen during the day?

_____% Shopping Centers/Malls
_____% Movie Theatre
_____% Residence (not including Apartments)
_____% Apartment Complex
_____% Employee Parking Lot
_____% Schools/Universities
_____% Other _____

10. From what locations do vehicles tend to be stolen during the night?

_____% Shopping Centers/Malls
_____% Movie Theatre
_____% Residence (not including Apartments)
_____% Apartment Complex
_____% Employee Parking Lot
_____% Schools/Universities
_____% Other _____

11. What percentage of perpetrators:

_____% Act alone in the commission of the crime
_____% Work in concert with other perpetrators

12. Among perpetrators that are caught, what percentages are:

_____% Under 14
_____% 14-18
_____% 19-21
_____% 22-29
_____% Over 30

13. Please rate the effectiveness of the following anti-theft devices in reducing motor vehicle theft in your experience.

	Very Effective	Effective	Moderately effective	Not effective	Not familiar
Steering wheel lock bars	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Armored column collars	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transmission locks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brake locks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wheel locks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VIN window etching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Audible vehicle alarms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Component parts marking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Immobilizing devices (kill switch)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keyless vehicle start systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. In the following statements, please indicate how effective you believe each of the following auto theft countermeasures are by checking the appropriate box.

	Very Effective	Effective	Moderately effective	Not effective	Not familiar
Multi-jurisdictional task forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Law enforcement personnel dedicated to auto theft cases	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prosecutors dedicated to auto theft cases	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Awareness campaigns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inspection of businesses for stolen vehicles/parts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training of law enforcement patrol personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training of prosecutors and judges	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promoting uniformity of data across agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More training in how to identify insurance fraud provided to law enforcement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aggressive pursuit of and publicizing of convictions for insurance fraud	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. We are interested in the use of bait cars to combat motor vehicle theft. What types of bait cars do you put out in your community?

16. Does your agency repeatedly use the same bait cars to combat auto theft?

___ Yes ___ No

16a. In what types of areas are bait cars placed in your jurisdiction?

16b. How long does the typical bait car stay in the same area?

24-48 hours 49-96 hours 97-144 hours 145+ hours

16c. Do you believe *entrapment* is an issue when a bait car is stolen? Yes No

Please explain your answer regarding the legal defense of *entrapment* in connection with the use of bait cars

17. Other states have implemented **watch your car** programs where citizens can voluntarily sign up to have their cars pulled over by police between the hours of 1am thru 5am and a mile within an international border. How effective do you think a similar program would be in combating auto theft in your jurisdiction?

Very effective Effective Moderately effective Not effective Not Sure

17a. In your opinion, should Washington implement in this program?

Yes Undecided No

17b. In your opinion, would many citizens in your area volunteer for a “Watch your car” program if one were available?

Likely YES Not Sure Likely NO

18. The State of Arizona has implemented a youth prevention program entitled “A Ride for Life” stressing the consequences of juvenile involvement in auto theft by emphasizing the effects on family, friends, and the community as a whole. The program provides educators with curricular materials. In your opinion, how effective would a similar program be in your jurisdiction?

Very effective Effective Moderately effective Not effective Not Sure

18a. In your opinion, would Washington Schools in your jurisdiction be likely to participate in the “A Ride for Life” program?

Very Likely Likely Unlikely Very Unlikely Not Sure

18b. How would you describe the level of juvenile involvement in motor vehicle theft in your jurisdiction?

High Involvement Moderate Involvement Minor Involvement
 Don't know

19. In some states local law enforcement sponsors free Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) etching events for local residents. In your opinion, would your jurisdiction benefit from similar events?

Certainly Possibly Benefit Not Sure Little Benefit Likely

- 19a. The State of Pennsylvania provides a free Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) Etching kit for their residents. Motorists unable to attend a VIN etching event held by local law enforcement can request a free kit to do their own VIN etching. In your opinion, would your jurisdiction benefit from a similar program?
 ___ Certainly ___ Possibly Benefit ___ Not Sure ___ Little Benefit Likely

The following two questions list nine approaches used in other states to reduce auto theft. Assume that you have a \$10 million budget for auto theft programs for Washington. In the first question, please indicate what you think is the optimal allocation of money across the nine methods. In the spaces provided, allocate 100% of these funds for auto theft programs across the nine methods. If there is an additional approach not listed that you think is effective, you may write it in the space provided. Please make certain the column adds up to 100%. For the second question, please indicate what percentage decrease in auto theft you estimate would result from this amount being allocated to each method.

20. Type in each space the percentage of funds you would allocate to this method. Do not use decimals or the % sign. For example, if you think a method should get 20 percent of the funds you would write in its box 20.
- _____ % Law enforcement personnel dedicated to auto theft issues.
 - _____ % Prosecutors dedicated to auto theft issues.
 - _____ % Community programs, such as etching vehicle glass.
 - _____ % Public awareness campaigns.
 - _____ % Insurance company investigators.
 - _____ % Inspection of businesses for stolen vehicles/parts.
 - _____ % Training of law enforcement personnel.
 - _____ % Training of prosecutors and judges.
 - _____ % Multi-jurisdictional task force with police and prosecutorial personnel.
 - _____ % Other: _____
21. For each method, please indicate what you think would be the result of allocating this amount of money to the method. Type in each space the percentage decrease in auto theft that you think would occur if your state allocated this amount of money to it. Again, do not use decimals or the % sign. For example, if you think the amount of money you allocated to a method would produce a 2 percent decrease in auto theft, you would write 2 in its space.
- _____ % Law enforcement personnel dedicated to auto theft issues.
 - _____ % Prosecutors dedicated to auto theft issues.
 - _____ % Community programs, such as etching vehicle glass.
 - _____ % Public awareness campaigns.
 - _____ % Insurance company investigators.
 - _____ % Inspection of businesses for stolen vehicles/parts.
 - _____ % Training of law enforcement personnel.
 - _____ % Training of prosecutors and judges.
 - _____ % Multi-jurisdictional task force with police and prosecutorial personnel.
 - _____ % Other _____

22. Cars equipped with license plate readers “scanner cars” are becoming widely used to combat motor vehicle theft. How interested would your jurisdiction be in a grant aimed at supplying more scanner equipment?

Very interested Interested Somewhat Interested Uninterested

23. How confident are you in the accuracy of scanner cars?

Very Confident Confident Somewhat Confident Not Confident
 No Opinion

24. Some people feel the scanner car represents a major breakthrough in combating motor vehicles theft. What is your opinion on this matter?

A Major Breakthrough A Modest Advancement Limited Advancement

Comments:

25. Are you aware that the Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority (WATPA) has a website?

Yes No

25a. If you answered yes to question 25, how did you come to know about this website?

25b. Have you ever visited the WATPA website?

Yes No

25c. If you answered yes, do you think the website provide enough information for the citizens and law enforcement agencies?

Yes No

25d. If you answered no, what information should be added to improve the WATPA website? Record any other suggestions you have to improve the WATPA website.

26. Please describe any unique or noteworthy strategies or programs that have been developed in your agency for addressing the problem of auto theft.

27. What noteworthy problems has your agency experienced in its efforts to combat the problem of auto theft?

28. Please identify any emerging trends have you noted regarding auto theft in your jurisdiction.

29. What are three recommendations you would make to reduce the problem of motor vehicle theft in Washington?

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: Please record any comments you have on the study and on the topic of the auto theft problem and the operations of WATPA.

Appendix B

Prosecutor Survey

On-line Survey of Auto Theft Investigators

Instructions and Invitation to Participate in Voluntary, Confidential Survey

The *Division of Governmental Studies and Services* at *Washington State University* is conducting this survey among the auto theft prevention community. Researchers with the division have been contracted by the *Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority* (WATPA) to assess the problem of motor vehicle theft in Washington State, and to evaluate programs WATPA has developed for addressing the issue in our state during its initial years of existence. The research team is composed of two public administration faculty members, one criminal justice doctoral student, and one political science doctoral student.

The survey will take you about 30 minutes to fill out. Your participation in the survey is completely voluntary, and you can skip over any particular questions you do not wish to answer. You may discontinue participation in the survey at any point. We strongly encourage you to take part in the survey, however, so that we can do the best possible job of assessing the problem of motor vehicle theft in the State of Washington and the best possible job of offering well-grounded program suggestions for WATPA.

If you have any questions concerning the survey, please contact Professor Nicholas Lovrich at WSU in Pullman (509) 335-4811. You are assured that all survey responses will remain confidential, and only aggregate survey results will be reported to WATPA and in public reports. This survey meets all the requirements for the protection of respondent privacy and confidentiality.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Nicholas Lovrich

Director

Michael Gaffney

Associate Director

DIVISION OF GOVERNMENTAL STUDIES AND SERVICES
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

1. In your jurisdiction, how significant are the following problems?

	Significant	Moderately significant	Not significant	Not Sure
Motor Vehicle Theft	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Motor Vehicle Burglary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Car Jacking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Auto Theft Insurance Fraud	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Failure to Return Rental Cars	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Does your agency have dedicated prosecutors handling motor vehicle theft cases?

___ Yes ___ No

3. If you answered yes to question two, how many dedicated prosecutors are assigned to motor vehicle theft cases? _____

3a. Are these positions full-time? ___ Yes ___ No [If Yes, how many? ___]

3b. Are these positions part-time ___ Yes ___ No [If Yes, how many? ___]

4. Are these position(s) grant-funded? ___ Yes ___ No

4a. If yes, what is the **source** of the grant funding, the **amount** of the grant, and what percentage of the position(s) is grant-funded?

Source: _____ Amount: \$ _____ %

5. Are there dedicated prosecutors funded by your agency's annual budget? ___ Yes ___ No

5a. If yes, what percent of your staff time is set aside for auto theft cases? _____%

6. What percentage of the auto theft offenders in your jurisdiction are repeat offenders?

7. When prosecuting motor vehicle theft, does your office focus on the theft of high value vehicles?

___ Yes ___ No

If yes, what working definition do you use for high value vehicles?

8. How quickly does your agency tend to file motor vehicle theft cases?

___ 24-48 hours ___ 49-96 hours ___ 97-144 hours ___ 145+ hours

9. How quickly does your agency tend to file motor vehicle theft cases where a bait car is stolen?

24-48 hours 49-96 hours 97-144 hours 145+ hours

10. What is the typical sentence given to an auto theft offender prosecuted by your agency?

11. How would you describe the relationship your agency has with the detectives that investigate motor vehicle theft?

Close working relationship Adequate working relationship Poor relationship

12. Is any cross-department collaboration occurring in your jurisdiction to combat the auto theft problem? Yes No

12a. If yes, please list the other agencies/departments with which you are collaborating to combat auto theft.

13. Approximately what percentage of the auto theft offenders in your jurisdiction are also drug offenders? _____%

14. What percentage of auto theft offenders end up taking a DOSA plea in your jurisdiction? _____%

14a. In your opinion are DOSA pleas justified in most of the drug-related auto theft cases prosecuted by your agency? Yes No

Please provide commentary on your answer

15. What percentage of your auto theft cases result in a plea bargain rather than going to trial? _____%

16. What percentage of your auto theft cases involving theft of a bait car result in a plea bargain rather than going to trial? _____%

17. In motor vehicle theft cases involving theft of a bait car what percentage of defendants use an entrapment defense at trial? _____%

17a. In your experience, what percentage of entrapment defenses have been successful? _____%

17b. Do you believe entrapment is an issue when a bait car is stolen? Please elaborate.

18. In your experience, what percentage of bait car cases lead to conviction? _____%

The following two questions list nine approaches used in other states to reduce auto theft. Assume that you have a \$10 million budget for auto theft programs for Washington. In the first question, please indicate what you think is the optimal allocation of money across the nine methods. In the boxes provided, allocate 100% of these funds for auto theft programs across the nine methods. If there is an additional approach not listed that you think is effective, you may write it in the space provided. Please make sure the column adds up to 100%. For the second question, what percentage decrease in auto theft do you think would result from this amount of money being allocated to each method.

19. Type in each box the percentage of funds you would allocate to this method. Do not use decimals or the % sign. For example, if you think a method should get 20 percent of the funds you would write 20 in its box. Please read through the entire list before making your allocations.

_____ % Law enforcement personnel dedicated to auto theft issues.

_____ % Prosecutors dedicated to auto theft issues.

_____ % Community programs, such as etching vehicle glass.

_____ % Public awareness campaigns.

_____ % Insurance company investigators.

_____ % Inspection of businesses for stolen vehicles/parts.

_____ % Training of law enforcement personnel.

_____ % Training of prosecutors and judges.

_____ % Multi-jurisdictional task force with law enforcement and prosecutorial personnel.

_____ % Other: _____

20. For each approach, please indicate what you think would be the result of allocating this amount of money to the method. Type in each box the percentage decrease in auto theft that you think would occur if Washington allocated this amount of money to it. Again, do not use decimals or the % sign. For example, if you think the amount of money you allocated to a method would produce a 2 percent decrease in auto theft, you would write 2 in its box.

- _____ % Law enforcement personnel dedicated to auto theft issues.
- _____ % Prosecutors dedicated to auto theft issues.
- _____ % Community programs, such as etching vehicle glass.
- _____ % Public awareness campaigns.
- _____ % Insurance company investigators.
- _____ % Inspection of businesses for stolen vehicles/parts.
- _____ % Training of law enforcement personnel.
- _____ % Training of prosecutors and judges.
- _____ % Multi-jurisdictional task force with law enforcement and prosecutorial personnel.
- _____ % Other _____

21. In the following statements, please indicate how effective you believe each of the following auto theft countermeasures are by checking the appropriate box.

	Very Effective	Effective	Moderately effective	Not effective	Not familiar
Multi-jurisdictional task forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Law enforcement personnel dedicated to auto theft cases	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prosecutors dedicated to auto theft cases	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Awareness campaigns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inspection of businesses for stolen vehicles/parts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training of law enforcement patrol personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training of prosecutors and judges	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promoting uniformity of data across agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More training in how to identify insurance fraud provided to law enforcement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aggressive pursuit of and publicizing of convictions for insurance fraud	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

22. Has your agency experienced any noteworthy problems in combating motor vehicle theft? If so, please describe.

23. Have you noted any emerging trends regarding motor vehicle theft? If so, please describe.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: Please record any comments you have on the study and on the topic of the auto theft problem and the operations of WATPA.

Appendix C

Text of the Elizabeth Nowak-Washington Auto Theft Prevention Act, Laws of 2007: Legislative Intent Section

BILL REQ. #: H-0146.5

HOUSE BILL 1001

State of Washington

60th Legislature

2007 Regular Session

By Representatives Lovick, Priest, McCoy, Pearson, Kirby, Ross, Hunt, Skinner, Simpson, Newhouse, O'Brien, Armstrong, Ericks, Moeller, Miloscia, Grant, Sells, Green, Eickmeyer, Takko, Kelley, B. Sullivan, Hudgins, Cody, Haigh, Morrell, Chase, Ormsby, Kessler, Blake, Conway, Chandler, P. Sullivan, McDonald, Rodne, Haler, Jarrett, Roach, Walsh, Kristiansen, Wallace, McDermott, Condotta, VanDeWege, Dunshee, McCune, Kenney, Schual-Berke, Hinkle, Bailey, Lantz, Warnick, Upthegrove, Alexander, Campbell and Rolfes

Prefiled 12/18/2006. Read first time 01/08/2007. Referred to Committee on Public Safety & Emerg Prep.

AN ACT Relating to auto theft; amending RCW 9A.56.030, 9A.56.040, 9A.56.150, 9A.56.160, 9.94A.734, 13.40.0357, 13.40.038, 13.40.210, and 9A.56.096; reenacting and amending RCW 9.94A.525; adding a new section to chapter 13.40 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 9.94A RCW; adding a new section to chapter 48.22 RCW; adding a new chapter to Title 46 RCW; creating new sections; and prescribing penalties.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1 (1) The legislature finds that:

(a) Automobiles are an essential part of our everyday lives. The west coast is the only region of the United States with an increase of over three percent in motor vehicle thefts over the last several years. The family car is a priority of most individuals and families. The family car is typically the second largest investment a person has next to the home, so when a car is stolen, it causes a significant loss and inconvenience to people, imposes financial hardship, and negatively impacts their work, school, and personal activities. Appropriate and meaningful penalties that are proportionate to the crime committed must be imposed on those who steal motor vehicles;

(b) In Washington, more than one car is stolen every eleven minutes, one hundred thirty-eight cars are stolen every day, someone's car has a one in one hundred seventy-nine chance of being stolen, and more vehicles were stolen in 2005 than in any other previous

year. Since 1994, auto theft has increased over fifty-five percent, while other property crimes like burglary are on the decline or holding steady. The national crime insurance bureau reports that Seattle and Tacoma ranked in the top ten places for the most auto thefts, ninth and tenth respectively, in 2004. In 2005, over fifty thousand auto thefts were reported costing Washington citizens more than three hundred twenty-five million dollars in higher insurance rates and lost vehicles. Nearly eighty percent of these crimes occurred in the central Puget Sound region consisting of the heavily populated areas of King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties;

(c) Law enforcement has determined that auto theft, along with all the grief it causes the immediate victims, is linked more and more to offenders engaged in other crimes. Many stolen vehicles are used by criminals involved in such crimes as robbery, burglary, and assault. In addition, many people who are stopped in stolen vehicles are found to possess the personal identification of other persons, or to possess methamphetamine, precursors to methamphetamine, or equipment used to cook methamphetamine;

(d) Juveniles account for over half of the reported auto thefts with many of these thefts being their first criminal offense. It is critical that they, along with first time adult offenders, are appropriately punished for their crimes. However, it is also important that first time offenders who qualify receive appropriate counseling treatment for associated problems that may have contributed to the commission of the crime, such as drugs, alcohol, and anger management; and

(e) A coordinated and concentrated enforcement mechanism is critical to an effective statewide offensive against motor vehicle theft. Such a system provides for better communications between and among law enforcement agencies, more efficient implementation of efforts to discover, track, and arrest auto thieves, quicker recovery, and the return of stolen vehicles, saving millions of dollars in potential loss to victims and their insurers.

(2) It is the intent of this act to deter motor vehicle theft through a statewide cooperative effort by combating motor vehicle theft through tough laws, supporting law enforcement activities, improving enforcement and administration, effective prosecution, public awareness, and meaningful treatment for first time offenders where appropriate. It is also the intent of the legislature to ensure that adequate funding is provided to implement this act in order for real, observable reductions in the number of auto thefts in Washington state.

Appendix D

Survey Comments

Comments from Law Enforcement

- Finding funding to undertake extensive Auto Theft investigations, along with funding for personnel, equipment, and overtime.
- Budget. The grant has made a number of things possible!
- In the Spokane area I have noted that a small number of individuals are responsible for the majority of the auto thefts. Police are arresting and convicting these individuals. The trends in auto theft crime are directly related to the minimal sentence the offenders serve. When a prolific car thief is arrested and sentenced for example to three months in jail, when he/she is released the same offender is often arrested again for another auto theft crime. The pattern then starts over again. Longer sentences would help reduce the number of victims. When interviewing suspects they often claim that doing a few months in jail is an acceptable risk for the crime.
- Prior to the organization of dedicated prosecutorial support in King County, we had problems with the filing of charges in auto theft related investigations. Prior to the formation of the Auto Theft Tactical Analysis Center for King County, there was little information sharing, either formal or informal, between law enforcement agencies working auto theft and related crimes.
- Tracking predictions. We would like, and hope to, get an analyst on board in the coming years to help with tracking and predicting incidents.
- Getting complete recovery information. Many times we do not actually get a copy of a recovery report (even when we request it) if it was recovered by an outside agency. Inconsistent reports (original stolen and recovery reports).
- Lack of information availability and information sharing
- Penalties not effective for deterrence
- VIN switching of vehicles stolen from dealerships, where the keys were taken or switched unknowingly at the dealerships.
- Catalytic Converter theft. It skyrockets when the market for platinum goes over \$900 per ounce.
- Cold weather warm ups by victims always tend to increase the amount of thefts. Possible news release to "educate" citizens may help. Several suspects have commented that they can increase the number of shaved keys by simply going to salvage yards and taking the keys that are left in the ignition of the abandoned vehicles. Requiring or suggesting that the salvage yards remove the keys may reduce the number of keys that are possessed and then later used by auto theft suspects.

- Theft from dealerships using the "key swap" method. VIN switching using stolen or fraudulent Abandoned Vehicle Reports and stolen salvage VIN's from wrecking yards in Washington State or from neighboring states.
- Shaved keys which fit multiple vehicles
- Problems with Hondas and Nissans recently. Many have been recovered in the Yakima area. One was at a chop shop near Sunnyside.
- Fueled by meth
- Investigation ... Enforcement ... Education!
- Install immobilizers on vehicles, Organize cops and prosecutors to work in task forces and deploy ALPR's, bait cars on a regular basis.
- Expansion of auto theft investigative group in Clark County. Formation of a regional auto theft task force in the Yakima Valley. Continued support of existing auto theft groups and dedicated auto theft personnel already in operation.
- More Bait vehicles. Dedicated Task Forces. ALPRS
- Auto theft task force; detectives assigned just to auto theft; prosecutors assigned to auto theft.
- More crime analysts One information sharing system used by all agencies More enforcement teams dedicated to auto theft investigations
- Multi jurisdictional task force and watch lists Increased penalties Increased technology
- We appreciate the WATPA's support and look forward to the continued partnership and support!
- Good Luck!
- Please feel free to contact me for additional information or clarification. Detective Craig Wendt Spokane Police Department 509-625-4204 CWENDT@SPOKANEPOLICE.ORG
- The formation of WATPA was a major step in the right direction. The grant money supplied by WATPA was, is and will be the turning point. A push for dedicated task forces for agencies who do not have them should be discussed.

Comments from prosecutors

- Up until recently, the light sentences made the whole process seem like a waste of time. In small counties nobody specialized in it, and it was handled in people's spare time.
- Skepticism within the law enforcement / legal community about the effort itself. Car theft cases have historically been given little respect - they are not sexy - and many still view the emphasis with disdain. Many do not differentiate between a crime's seriousness (like homicide) and its importance to the community (like burglary or car theft). A clear minded approach on that distinction would be helpful.
- We have experienced problems with auto theft investigations completed by patrol officers. Too many officers arrest for possession and do not pursue the investigation of the suspect's mental state. We always need proof the suspect knew the vehicle was stolen
- Ride and burn cases difficult to investigate and prove. Suspect some is insurance fraud but can't distinguish
- There is occurring a change in attitude stemming from the change of attitude stemming from the change of sentencing.
- With the stiffer sentences, there has been an increase in car prowling (car burgs). ID Theft flows naturally from this increase.
- We have seen an increase in cars being stolen and shipped
- My county has one auto theft case every two or three years, so basically none of this applies to us. Even when we get such cases, they are usually domestic disputes in which a child drives off with a parent's car after having been forbidden to leave home. Now and then we catch someone in a stolen car or we find a stolen car dumped in the woods. It's not that our people in Wahkiakum County are any more virtuous than people elsewhere, it's just that our low population base makes it sparse pickings for professional thieves.
- The solutions given interrelate so much that each one affects the other and the assignment of benefits is impossible to accurately segregate.
- Thank you for the opportunity to respond concerning this topic. For the average citizen theft of a car is second only to burglary in seriousness. We in Pierce County have long hoped for additional resources to combat the problem. The funding of the grant
- Auto theft is a low risk crime for criminal. The only way to significantly lower the number is to raise the risk level (perceived). The chances of getting caught have to double or more and the cost of getting caught has to negate the reward for the crime

Appendix E

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