



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeremy Cooney

## Senator Cooney Introduces Car Theft Prevention Act

JEREMY COONEY November 3, 2023

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**(ROCHESTER, NY)** - Today, **NYS Senator Jeremy Cooney (D-Rochester)** formally announced the *Car Theft Prevention Act*, a bill that will empower local law enforcement and judges, giving them another tool to address the rise in car break-ins and thefts impacting Rochester and other communities across New York State.

This new bill adds the felony offenses of criminal possession of stolen property in the first through fourth degrees as qualifying offenses that can trigger bail eligibility and

consideration by local judges. Currently, those charged with vehicle theft are not eligible to be assigned bail.

Encouraged by social media trends, car thefts have been on the rise across New York State. Unfortunately, some areas of the state have been disproportionately impacted by these car thefts and break-ins, especially for Hyundai and Kia models.

Monroe County (Rochester) has seen the highest increase of any county in the nation, with a 345 percent increase in car thefts in the first seven months of 2023, the City of Rochester was hit the hardest within the region, experiencing a staggering 829 percent increase. Western New York has also experienced a disproportionate increase in car thefts and break-ins. Erie County has seen a 213 percent increase. These two counties alone account for two-thirds of the car thefts in the state, outside of New York City.

The bill will not impact those under the age of eighteen, who will continue to be referred to Family Court and associated intervention and diversion programs, such as the new JEDS initiative being modeled in Monroe County.

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*This legislation came directly from neighbors across Rochester desperately seeking help from New York State,” said **Senator Jeremy Cooney**. “Anyone who has experienced a car theft understands the invasion of privacy and feeling of vulnerability these crimes create. We seek to give local law enforcement and judges another tool to send a strong message that there will be consequences for these car thefts, and they must stop.”*

“This year the City of Rochester has seen an 829% increase in car thefts. These crimes are plaguing our community and have significant adverse impacts on economic growth and prosperity,” said **Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Bob Duffy**. “This

legislation is a good step toward deterring the unprecedented number of car thefts happening in this City. Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce is proud to stand with Senator Jeremy Cooney and other business and community leaders in their effort to curb the car theft crisis in Rochester with our support of the Car Theft Prevention Act.”

“The increase in car theft has affected me personally not only as Pastor of the oldest historically African American Church in Rochester but as a member of this community who is concerned about my neighbors,” said **Rev. Dr. Rickey B. Harvey**, *Pastor, Mt. Olivet Baptist Church*. “The victims are our neighbors. They're college students, single mothers, and all types of hard-working people who depend on their transportation. These are good people who don't deserve the hardship this crime brings. We, at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, have had to deal with car thefts at our historic community church here in the Corn Hill district. Whereas this is only a start, it's a very necessary step. I commend Senator Cooney for having the courage to take that first step. It's time for this to be addressed and this bill is a start. So thank you Senator Cooney.”

“For those of us who work and live in our neighborhood, we are victimized twice by car thefts and car vandalism, it’s an overwhelming feeling we can’t seem to escape,” said **Ida Perez**, *Scrantom Block Club and Director, Ibero Early Childhood Services*.

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