

# INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION



# AUTO THEFT INVESTIGATORS

February 9, 2011

I am the President of the International Association of Auto Theft Investigators representing over 3,800 vehicle theft investigators worldwide. I wanted to weigh in our position to a proposal to cut funding to the Texas Automobile Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority.

In Maryland, we saw a significant jump in vehicle thefts when funding was cut to the Maryland Vehicle Theft Prevention Council. When funding was restored, it took us years to rebuild the knowledge base for the experienced investigators who we lost. The value of the lost vehicles was many times the lost funding to the vehicle theft council. In short, I predict that taking these funds will cost the State of Texas many times more than the \$15 million dollars that they initially save for taking the funds.

Many people do not know that vehicle theft recovery rates have dipped to an all-time low. In the past, youths stole many lower priced vehicles that were easy to steal, and most of these vehicles were recovered. Today, our adversaries are professional and trans-national. The vehicles they steal tend to be within one model year old, and are of much higher value. Patrol officers can handle joy-riders, but for addressing professional vehicle thieves, Texas needs technically trained and equipped auto theft investigators.

When a vehicle-borne explosive is used, as was the case recently in Chihuahua Mexico or in Times Square in New York, you rapidly need an identification expert to examine the vehicle. The 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center was cracked after rapidly identifying the vehicle that was used. Once funding is eliminated, your vehicle theft experts will retire and law enforcement will lose their advanced vehicle identification skills.

We are needed more today than ever before. In Baltimore, we recover stolen vehicles from Texas, and your investigators recover stolen vehicles heading to the border in Texas. If you choose to not hold up your end of this unwritten contract between us, then other states may follow. Additionally, once vehicle thieves learn that Texas is wide open for illegal business; chop-shops may proliferate in Texas, creating a breeding ground for organized crime groups.

Texas can be proud of the leadership role that you have held with your vehicle theft investigators and the Texas Automobile Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority. Some have said that we can "gift" the auto theft problem to insurance companies. The funding mechanism that Texas created was innovative, and was the best manner in which to spread the cost to insurance carriers. Without the Texas Automobile Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority, the only remedy insurance companies have is to pay claims and raise insurance rates. If given the choice to continue paying the \$1 per car premium into the Texas Automobile Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority, or paying higher premiums post theft rates, I believe that the Citizens of Texas will wonder why the Authority which worked so well was defunded. It's a bad bargain to make.

**INTERNATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION**



**AUTO THEFT  
INVESTIGATORS**

Thanks for your time and consideration. My organization stands ready to provide more detailed information in this matter and to assist you with data. Many of us know that we often lose a lot of money trying to save some pennies.

Sincerely,

Christopher T. McDonold

President 2010-2011

International Association of Auto Theft Investigator's

Office (410) 887-6247

Cell (443) 677-9420

[cmcdonold@iaati.org](mailto:cmcdonold@iaati.org)