



BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

Richard Worley
Police Commissioner

November 8, 2023

Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
Room 400, City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street

Baltimore, Maryland 21202

RE: City Council Bill #23-0187R
Informational Hearing- Theft of Cars

Dear Council President Mosby and Members of the City Council:

The Baltimore Police Department (BPD) has reviewed Council Bill 23-0187R for the purpose of inviting the Deputy Mayor of Public Safety and representatives from the Baltimore City Police Department, the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, the Office of the State's Attorney for Baltimore City, and other relevant agencies to engage in a discussion with the City Council regarding the recent rise in auto thefts throughout Baltimore City, including a discussion of options to prevent or mitigate such occurrences.

Recent car theft trends are not area specific. Nationwide, cities are dealing with a rise in stolen automobiles. While car jackings have decreased by 33% since 2022 they are still happening far too often for our citizens to feel safe. Stolen automobiles, however have significantly increased with an uptick in juvenile perpetrators. With this topic gripping headlines and posing a clear danger and stressor to all Baltimoreans, the Baltimore Police Department agrees that we must explore multiple avenues and mechanisms to decrease this troubling trend. Deterrence and Deployment techniques are helpful and necessary but ultimately, they only address the surface of the issue. As a city, we must look at all aspects leading to this increase in these specific crimes being committed increasingly by our young people.

PREVENTION & DETERRENCE

As previously stated, deterrence techniques are only a band-aid solution for this issue but can prove to be helpful to residents. The BPD shares a detailed list of crime prevention tips on its website under "Community" and "Safety and Crime Prevention Tips". Officers are also encouraged to share these tips to the public at community meetings, events, and in passing. Some tips include common sense methods that are easy for citizens to forget at times such as:

- Lock your vehicle
- Don't leave desirable items out in plain view
- Don't leave the car running by itself

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- Pay attention to surroundings

Due to viral online videos, Hyundai and Kia now make up 68% of all stolen autos in Baltimore City. The Baltimore City Administration is continuing to work with Hyundai and Kia manufacturers to remedy this situation. Police District Offices have had free wheel locks available to Hyundai and Kia owners who arrive with proper identification. An estimated 3,000 wheel locks have been distributed so far. There are two upcoming public giveaways where 500 wheel locks will be available at each event. An additional 1,000 wheel locks will later be disbursed among police districts and kept available at district offices. At the start of 2024, Baltimore will host a city-wide anti-theft software update for Kia and Hyundai models.

ARREST DATA

Year-to-date, the Baltimore Police Department has made 650 stolen auto related arrests. Of those 650 arrested, 220 were juvenile offenders. At this time, 77 juveniles have been arrested for robbery offenses including carjacking and 30 juveniles have been arrested multiple times for carjacking and stolen automobiles.

Deterrents and arrests are only the beginning pieces of this ever-evolving situation. Long term solutions must be employed in order to create a city where residents, students, business employees, and visitors feel safe and confident. City Leadership, Agencies and State law makers must find ways to ensure justice after arrests are made and vehicles are recovered.

The BPD has no objections to City Council Bill 23-0187R. We look forward to the upcoming momentous discussion on this issue and are committed to finding long term solutions for this matter.

Sincerely,



Erin Murphy, Esq.
Director of Government Affairs

cc: Natwana Austin, Executive Secretary of the Baltimore City Council
Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations
Dominic McAlily, Special Assistant and Legislative Liaison, MOGR
Andrew Smullian, BPD Deputy Chief of Staff