

HB 1420 -- AUTO THEFT PREVENTION

SPONSOR: Mayhew

This bill creates the "Auto Theft Prevention Program". Under the program, law enforcement agencies and other qualified applicants can apply for grants for automobile theft prevention and the prosecution of automobile theft.

The supervision, authority, and control of the Program will be at the discretion of the Auto Theft Prevention Commission, which the bill establishes. Allocation of money by the Commission, including awarding grants, will receive approval from the Director of the Department of Public Safety.

The bill details the Commission's membership, and will include the Superintendent of the State Highway Patrol or their designee and several people appointed by the Governor from specific departments, agencies, bureaus, and associations. A consumer who has been impacted by automobile theft will also be appointed to the Commission.

This bill explains the details of the Commission members' terms and appointments. Members of the Commission will serve without compensation, except reimbursement for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. The State Highway Patrol will provide the administration, management, and organization of the Commission's activities and grant programs. Subject to available funding, the Commission can appoint a director, who can employ necessary staff to operate and administer the Program. These operation and administration costs will not exceed eight percent.

The bill requires the Commission to establish a grant program for the provision of funds to local law enforcement agencies and multi-jurisdictional task forces for purposes detailed in this bill related to motor vehicle-related crime reduction and prevention. The Commission will also promote statewide coordination and provide support to local prosecutors and multi-jurisdictional task forces.

The Commission will solicit and select applications for grants to fund programs addressing motor vehicle theft. This bill explains the application and selection process. It also gives a non-exclusive list of the types of programs that will receive available funding. The Executive Director of the Department of Public Safety will make rules for the administration of the program as detailed in the bill.

The bill requires applicants that receive a grant to submit a report to the Commission concerning the implementation of the program funded via the grant by December 1, 2026. The Commission will report to the Judiciary Committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives on the implementation of the programs receiving grants by February 1, 2027. The details of this report's requirements are included in the bill.

This bill increases the fee for a certificate of ownership of a motor vehicle or trailer from eight to 13 dollars. It creates the "Auto Theft Prevention Commission Revolving Fund", which will receive all funds paid for those certificates and can receive and use funds granted by Congress, Executive Order, gifts, and donations. Money remaining in the fund will not automatically revert to the General Revenue Fund.

The provisions of the bill will automatically terminate after six years unless reauthorized by an act of the General Assembly.