

# Belt-supported Laws Aim To Address Increase In Carjackings

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EAST ST. LOUIS – State Senator Christopher Belt supported proposals to address the increase in car thefts and hijackings that were signed into law Thursday.

According to a [January report from CNN](#), cities around the country have seen an increase in the rate of carjackings.

“The increase in the number of carjackings is disturbing,” said Belt (D-Swansea). “Innocent people are being targeted by this senseless crime across Illinois.”

House Bill 601 modernizes the definition of the possession of burglary tools offense to include devices designed to unlock or start a vehicle without a key and devices designed to capture or duplicate a signal from a key fob. Car thieves have exploited new technology that can pick up the RFID signal from a key fob at a distance, allowing a victim’s vehicle to be unlocked or stolen even while the fob remains in their home. According to the National Insurance Crime Bureau, Illinois saw a 13% increase in car thefts from 2019-2020.

House Bill 3699 will provide law enforcement with additional resources to coordinate efforts to put a stop to carjackings. Under the legislation, the Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council – made up of representatives from the insurance industry, state’s attorneys and law enforcement – will be tasked with working together to reduce carjackings. The Council currently provides grant funding to three task forces – comprised of law enforcement and state’s attorneys – which investigate and prosecute motor vehicle threat and similar crimes.

House Bill 3772 will provide protections for victims of carjackings who receive red light or speed camera violations after their vehicle has been hijacked. Under the new law, if a person receives a citation due to one of these camera violations, the court or hearing officer would be able to consider whether the vehicle was hijacked before the violation occurred or the victim not under the control of or possession of the vehicle at the time of violation.

“We have worked to address the increase in crime,” Belt said. “Working with law enforcement officials to get them the resources they need is vital – and these laws do just that.”

The new laws take effect Jan. 1, 2023.