

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF CREATING A STATE AUTHORITY TO COMBAT THE PROBLEM OF AUTOMOBILE THEFT IN NEW MEXICO.

WHEREAS, according to crime data from the federal bureau of investigation, there were over nine thousand offenses of motor vehicle theft committed in New Mexico in 2006, and the number of motor vehicle thefts per one hundred thousand New Mexicans is four hundred seventy-three; and

WHEREAS, automobile thieves use stolen vehicles to sell automobile parts on the highly profitable illegal parts market and to export automobile components and intact vehicles to other states and countries; and

WHEREAS, stolen automobiles are also used as instrumentalities in violent crimes, drug offenses, theft and gang activities; and

WHEREAS, New Mexicans are at a particular risk of automobile theft because of New Mexico's proximity to the international border and the state's rapidly increasing rates of trafficking and using methamphetamine, which is a criminal-lifestyle drug that fuels a broad range of criminal activity, including automobile theft, forgery, credit card fraud, identity theft, mail theft, burglary and shoplifting; and

WHEREAS, automobile theft is a statewide problem that

requires greater cooperation among the state's law enforcement agencies and district attorneys, the motor vehicle insurance industry, community organizations and business organizations; and

WHEREAS, enhanced statewide coordination among law enforcement agencies across the state, including the sharing of information regarding automobile theft "hot spots", would enhance law enforcement's ability to track automobile theft rings, develop a statewide strategy for the arrest of automobile theft offenders and track auto theft across state lines; and

WHEREAS, many of New Mexico's neighboring states in the southwest region have established automobile theft prevention authorities for the purpose of combating, preventing and investigating automobile theft, including Colorado, Arizona and Texas; and

WHEREAS, automobile theft prevention authorities in those states use various mechanisms to combat automobile theft, such as implementing community education and public awareness programs as well as providing grants to law enforcement agencies to improve cooperation, establish automobile theft investigative units and employ specialized training;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the governor

be requested to convene a task force to study the feasibility of creating a state authority to combat the problem of automobile theft in New Mexico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the membership of the task force include the attorney general or the attorney general's designee; the secretary of public safety or the secretary's designee; the director of the motor vehicle division of the taxation and revenue department or the director's designee; representatives of local law enforcement agencies across the state, including representatives from both the metropolitan and rural areas of New Mexico; a representative from the administrative office of the district attorneys; and representatives from the automobile insurance industry; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work of the task force include the following:

A. a review of automobile theft prevention authorities in other states that may serve as models for New Mexico;

B. an evaluation of the programs and initiatives of automobile theft prevention authorities in other states, including programs and initiatives related to community education, public awareness, statewide vehicle registration, specialized training for law enforcement agencies, coordinated communication among law enforcement agencies and support for investigative units and complex automobile theft prosecutions;

and

C. a review of cost estimates for the creation and operation of an automobile theft prevention authority in New Mexico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force present a report of its findings and recommendations, including any recommendations for proposed legislation, to the interim legislative courts, corrections and justice committee no later than November 1, 2008; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the governor and the co-chairs of the interim legislative courts, corrections and justice committee.