



Texas Department *of* Motor Vehicles

# Plan of Operation for the Automobile Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority

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Prepared for the  
Texas Legislature  
for  
Fiscal Years 2020-2021

December 1, 2018



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TEXAS AUTO BURGLARY & THEFT PREVENTION AUTHORITY

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c/o Assistant Chief Wynn Reynolds  
Ex-Officio,  
Texas Department of Public Safety (TxDPS),  
Austin**

**ABTPA Director**  
Bryan Wilson  
512-465-4012  
[Bryan.Wilson@txdmv.gov](mailto:Bryan.Wilson@txdmv.gov)

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**Automobile Burglary Theft and Prevention Authority**  
**Fiscal Years 2020-2021 Plan of Operation**  
 Prepared for the 86<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature

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## Executive Summary

For 25 years the Texas Automobile Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority (**ABTPA**) has been an essential part of Texas law enforcement. The ABTPA promotes safety and protection for all Texans by working to reduce motor vehicle crimes. The core mission of the ABTPA is to build a collaborative statewide network of law enforcement, government agencies, and insurance companies to reduce motor vehicle burglary and theft crimes. This Fiscal Year (**FY**) 2020-2021 Plan of Operation informs the Texas Legislature of the status of the ABTPA and of the efforts of the statewide network to reduce motor vehicle burglary and theft crimes. The statutorily required plan provides an assessment of motor vehicle burglary and theft crimes, an analysis of methods of combating these crimes, a plan to provide financial support, and an estimate of the funds required to implement this Plan of Operation.

The ABTPA meets its mission through the following tasks:

- 1) collect a \$2 fee on all motor vehicle insurance policies which provides more than \$48 million to the General Revenue Fund each year;
- 2) fund community-based law enforcement teams called motor vehicle crimes **taskforces**;
- 3) fight illegal use and export of motor vehicles in Texas by providing law enforcement operations in border and port jurisdictions;
- 4) provide specialized motor vehicle investigator law enforcement training; and
- 5) communicate with the public on what they can do to reduce motor vehicle burglary and theft crimes.

As a result of the ABTPA collaborative network on training, technology and effective law enforcement strategies, the level of motor vehicle burglary and theft crimes has remained fairly stable, however, the amount of loss to the public from these crimes rose to over \$1 Billion. The 2018-2019 biennium appropriation to the ABTPA was reduced by over \$2 million dollars to \$12.8 million per year. The revenues collected from the \$2 Motor Vehicle Theft fee on motor vehicle insurance policies rose to over \$48 million in FY18.

Motor vehicle burglaries and thefts have declined slightly even as the state's population has greatly increased. In FY18, the ABTPA funded law enforcement taskforces increased the recovery rate of stolen motor vehicles. The taskforces cleared fewer theft cases but made more theft related arrests than the previous year. Due to the funding cuts, taskforces prioritized thefts over burglaries so there were significant declines in cases cleared and people arrested for burglary of a motor vehicle.

The ABTPA helps local communities develop and maintain trained and specialized motor vehicle burglary and theft taskforces. Many taskforces are multijurisdictional, consisting of municipal and county law enforcement, and coordinate responses to motor vehicle crimes throughout a region. Motor vehicle crimes are often tied to organized crime and patterns of crime that require taskforces communicate across jurisdictional boundaries. There are criminal enterprises whose illegal behavior causes harmful losses to Texas businesses and communities. The provision of state resources through the ABTPA ensures that local law enforcement has the coordination and training to effectively combat these perpetrators across multiple jurisdictions.

The ABTPA is led by a governor appointed board and the Director of the Texas Department of Public Safety serves as an ex-officio member. The program is administratively attached to Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (**TxDMV**) and staffed as a division of TxDMV. The ABTPA, in concert with TxDMV, continues to be fiscally responsible by keeping administrative costs much lower than the maximum allowed in statute. This Plan of Operation is submitted by TxDMV on behalf of the ABTPA.

## Assessment of the Scope of the Problem

Texans suffer losses of over one Billion dollars each year due to motor vehicle burglary and theft crimes. The losses from these two crimes constitute about one half of all losses from property crimes reported in Texas. Additionally, victims suffer additional losses well beyond economic damage. These include, but are not limited to, lost time, lost personal wages, lost business revenue, and inconvenience of unplanned expenses. Some costs do not get reported under these burglary of a motor vehicle offenses because damage to cars during the break in, the losses of fraudulent use of stolen credit cards or other crime costs related to the burglary of a motor vehicle greatly exceed the loss reported at the time of the burglary offense. People also suffer when their personal perception of their community safety is reduced.

Type of Crime	Number	Value of Loss	Average Loss
Burglary from a Motor Vehicle and Theft of Parts	204,056	\$228,416,721	\$1,115
Motor Vehicle Theft	67,285	\$785,475,693	\$11,674
<b>CY 2017 Est. Total Loss</b>			<b>\$1,013,892,414</b>

Source: The Crime in Texas Report for 2017, Texas Department of Public Safety, CY= calendar year

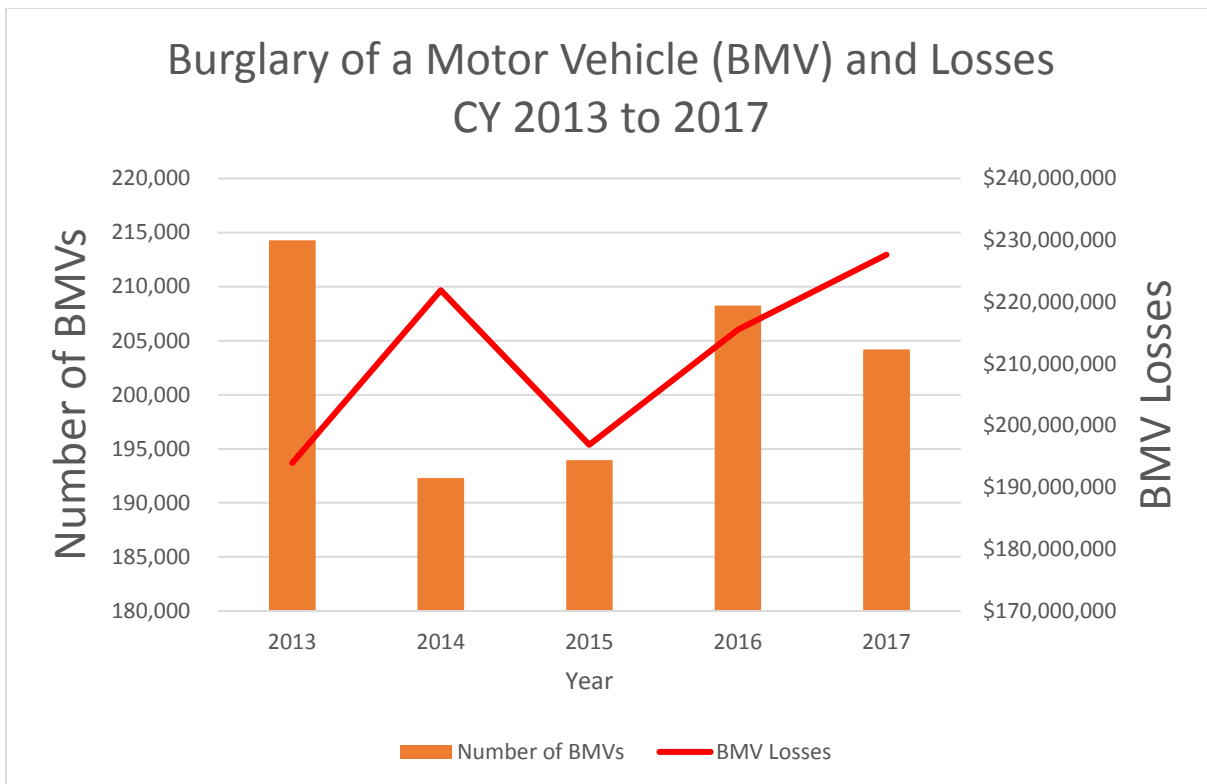
### TxDPS Crime Reporting and Motor Vehicle Burglary and Theft

Currently, Texas law enforcement agencies report crime data to the Texas Department of Public Safety (TxDPS). The crimes of motor vehicle burglary or theft are only listed as the offense when those were the highest level of crime committed at the time of the original offense report. The reporting system is a single incident reporting system that uses a “hierarchical rule.” This means that if a perpetrator burglarizes or steals a vehicle and then commits a more serious crime during the same incident, law enforcement agencies would only report the more serious crime to TxDPS. Therefore, actual numbers of motor vehicle burglaries and thefts and associated financial losses with these crimes are higher than reported. The TxDPS reports that in 2019 their system will change reporting to the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). The NIBRS reporting system will list the most serious offense and then include all associated offenses within the reported incident. Many states have already converted to the NIBRS system and are able to see the connections between motor vehicle burglary and theft to other more serious crimes.

### Motor Vehicle Burglary

Burglary of a motor vehicle for purposes of this report comprises the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) categories of larceny from a motor vehicle and larceny of motor vehicle parts. Numbers reported by the TxDPS in CY17 show that there were 204,056 incidents of burglary of a motor vehicle (BMV). This is a decrease of about 4,000 reported incidents statewide from the prior year. The financial losses associated with BMV crimes was \$228 million. This is a \$12 million more than losses reported in CY16. Many counties saw significant increases in incidents even though the overall total in the state dropped.

Burglary of a motor vehicle incidents and losses are greatly undercounted in part due to the hierarchical rule. Also, police reports indicate the offense of burglary from a motor vehicle but secondary offenses and secondary corresponding losses are not included in reports to TxDPS. The most common secondary losses for burglary of a motor vehicle occur when windows and doors are broken or other vehicle parts are damaged. This damage can be of greater value than items that were stolen from the car. Additionally, law enforcement agencies report substantial secondary losses from fraudulent credit card uses and identity information that is stolen and used subsequent to the original burglary of a motor vehicle crime. The ABTPA taskforces have reported that thefts of weapons from vehicles has increased over the last several years. One ABTPA taskforce tracked a firearm that was stolen in a burglary of a motor vehicle then was used in a murder.



Source: Texas Department of Public Safety Uniform Crime Report Data

Burglary of a motor vehicle crimes occur statewide but, the highest volume of incidents and losses are concentrated in urban areas. The five Texas counties with the largest populations (Harris, Dallas, Bexar, Tarrant, and Travis counties) represent less than one-half of the state population but account for more than two-thirds of reported BMV in Texas. These counties have consistently remained high in the number of BMVs and financial loss value for the last several years. The twenty counties with the largest populations make up over 86 percent of all BMVs and BMV financial losses.

The ABTPA continues to collect data that suggests episodes of organized crime and incidents of pattern crime are prevalent in large spikes of BMV in communities. Offenders will often organize to commit multiple burglaries in one area. Another organized criminal activity reported by about one-third of the taskforces is “Jugging.” Criminal actors set up at locations where victims draw cash or are expected to have cash. Preferred locations include banks, ATM machines and high-volume cash businesses. The taskforces have worked numerous cases where the perpetrators follow the victims from the cash dispensing businesses to a place where they can break into the vehicle. Several high profile cases in Texas have been reported in the Houston area media where the perpetrators resorted to aggravated robbery. In one reported Houston case, a bank teller assisted the perpetrators. Taskforces often combine their efforts with each other and other non-taskforce law enforcement agencies to stop these criminally organized attempts. Burglary of motor vehicles can be reduced if state resources were expanded to increase the number of investigators and equipment needed for better surveillance and bait equipment (commonly stolen items with hidden tracking devices left in high crime areas used to catch perpetrators) targeted to combat these types of crimes.



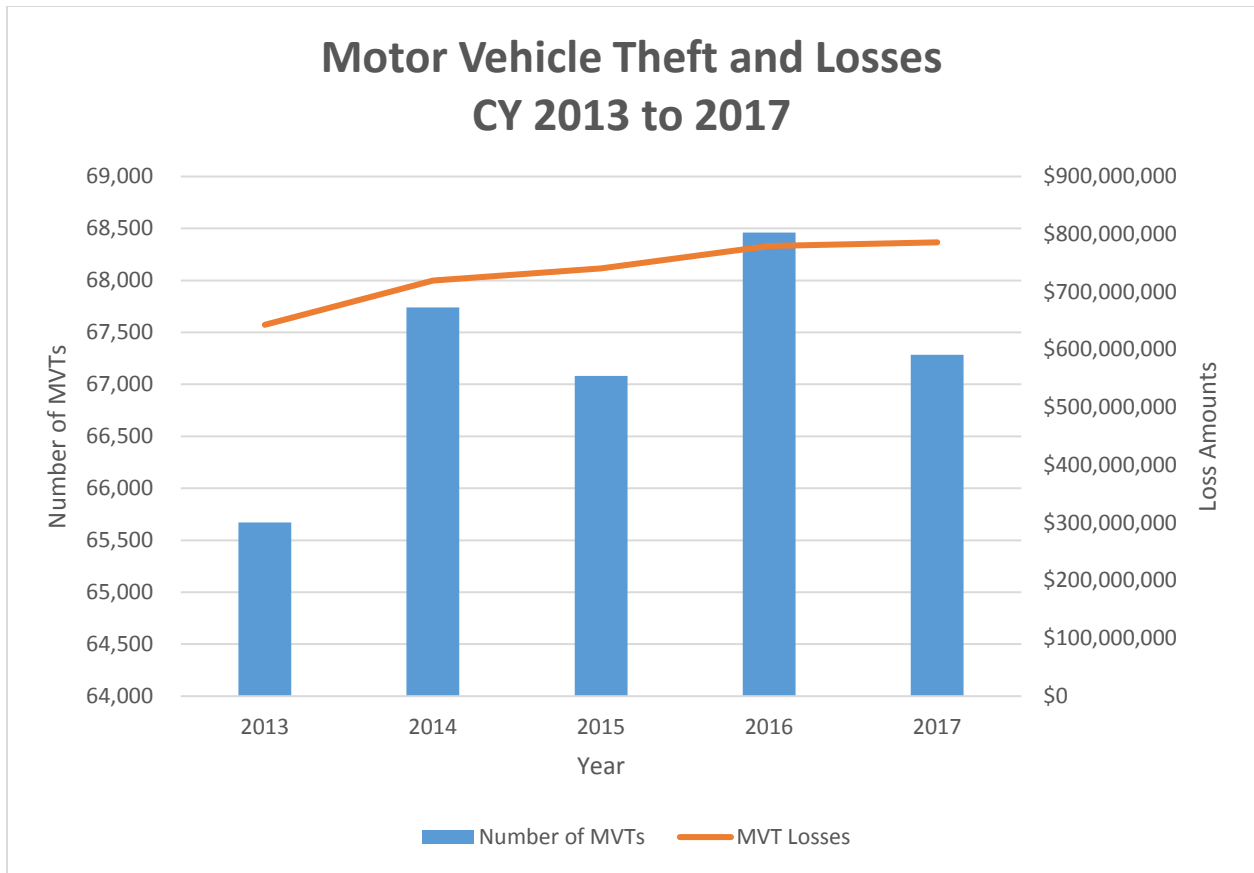
Number of Reported Crime Comparison: Top Twenty Counties Burglary From Motor Vehicle (including Parts)				Loss Amounts Comparison: Top Twenty Counties by Burglary From Motor Vehicle Losses (including Parts)				
County	CY 2016	County	CY 2017	Changes	County	CY 2016	County	CY 2017
Harris	56,173	Harris	57,164			Harris	\$73,751,977	Harris
Dallas	28,438	Dallas	27,392		Bexar	\$32,379,504	Bexar	\$28,728,514
Bexar	27,753	Bexar	25,469		Dallas	\$29,665,817	Dallas	\$28,662,349
Tarrant	15,360	Tarrant	16,869		Tarrant	\$13,243,564	Tarrant	\$15,064,729
Travis	11,241	Travis	11,829		Travis	\$9,537,272	Travis	\$10,603,760
Hidalgo	4,780	Hidalgo	4,126	>	Lubbock	\$3,723,301	Chambers	\$7,646,990
Lubbock	3,930	Lubbock	3,917	>	Hidalgo	\$3,618,932	Collin	\$3,613,460
Nueces	3,636	Nueces	3,517	>	Nueces	\$3,473,746	Lubbock	\$3,30,4783
Collin	3,482	Collin	3,610	>	Collin	\$2,997,371	Fort Bend	\$2,960,775
Fort Bend	2,999	Fort Bend	2,885	>	Fort Bend	\$2,653,357	Hidalgo	\$2,896,692
Cameron	2,592	Cameron	2,388	>	Montgomery	\$2,387,250	Nueces	\$2,856,080
El Paso	2,551	El Paso	2,369	>	El Paso	\$2,129,395	Potter	\$2,425,090
Potter	2,542	Denton	2,340	↔	Potter	\$2,111,384	Denton	\$2,065,489
Montgomery	2,405	Potter	2,310	<	Denton	\$2,087,470	Denton	\$2,111,384
Denton	2,372	Bell	2,291	↔	Midland	\$1,524,364	Montgomery	\$1,920,686
Bell	2,234	Jefferson	2,210	↔	Bell	\$1,476,225	El Paso	\$1,778,988
Galveston	2,074	Galveston	2,051	>	Williamson	\$1,319,404	Galveston	\$1,495,500
Jefferson	1,722	Montgomery	2,032	↔	Galveston	\$1,271,848	Bell	\$1,396,365
Williamson	1,651	Williamson	1,843	>	Cameron	\$1,266,400	Jefferson	\$1,384,761
Brazos	1,592	McLennan	1,734	↔	Webb	\$1,073,357	Williamson	\$1,384,574

Source: Texas Department of Public Safety Uniform Crime Report Data

## Motor Vehicle Theft

The Texas Department of Public Safety "*Crime in Texas*", states, "*Motor Vehicle Theft, for UCR purposes, is the theft or attempted theft of a motor vehicle. A motor vehicle is defined as a self-propelled vehicle that travels on the surface but not on rails...*" Motor vehicle theft (**MVT**) is tracked at the national and state level as a major index crime. As mentioned earlier, reported incidents reflected in the UCR are limited to those where the motor vehicle theft was the most serious crime reported by law enforcement agencies in a single event at the time of the original report. In instances where a motor vehicle theft is committed along with a more serious crime (e.g., murder, kidnapping, human trafficking, etc....) simultaneously, the motor vehicle theft would not be reported in UCR.

## Motor Vehicle Theft and Losses CY 2013 to 2017



Source: Texas Department of Public Safety Uniform Crime Report Data

Texas experienced a slight reduction of 1,245 incidents of motor vehicle theft in CY17 but loss values increased to over \$785 million dollars. The top twenty counties by incidents of MVT and amount of losses largely mirror the top twenty counties by population. Some urban counties saw significant increases in MVTs over previous year. Tarrant County who benefited from population increases also reports an increase seen in car dealerships being targeted, increases in newer vehicle models being taken, and an influx of offenders from other areas of the state affected by Hurricane Harvey.

Number of Reported Crime Comparison: Top Twenty Counties by Motor Vehicle Theft			
County	CY 2016	County	CY 2017
Harris	20491	Harris	18503
Dallas	12100	Dallas	12512
Bexar	8141	Bexar	7774
Tarrant	4415	Tarrant	5082
Travis	2457	Travis	2409
Lubbock	1145	Lubbock	1366
Hidalgo	1093	Potter	1000
Potter	951	Bell	929
El Paso	928	El Paso	898
Nueces	719	Nueces	783
Montgomery	702	Hidalgo	779
Ector	687	Galveston	759
Collin	680	Denton	729
Bell	652	Montgomery	724
Denton	634	Jefferson	696
Galveston	632	Collin	681
Fort Bend	549	Fort Bend	512
Jefferson	540	Ector	470
Smith	417	Smith	376
Brazoria	390	Brazoria	366

Changes

Loss Amounts Comparison: Top Twenty Counties by Motor Vehicle Theft Losses			
County	CY 2016 Loss Amount	County	CY 2017 Loss Amount
Harris	\$246,161,734	Harris	\$235,749,730
Dallas	\$133,839,237	Dallas	\$137,866,669
Bexar	\$123,064,083	Bexar	\$112,761,889
Tarrant	\$43,014,969	Tarrant	\$62,046,437
El Paso	\$14,831,943	Lubbock	\$15,009,500
Lubbock	\$11,258,805	El Paso	\$12,817,126
Hidalgo	\$11,155,666	Nueces	\$11,458,189
Ector	\$10,618,476	Collin	\$10,641,553
Nueces	\$10,025,316	Bell	\$9,351,564
Collin	\$9,851,302	Galveston	\$8,963,983
Fort Bend	\$9,473,193	Hidalgo	\$8,746,406
Galveston	\$7,972,069	Fort Bend	\$8,193,143
Travis	\$7,673,402	Denton	\$7,716,750
Denton	\$7,065,553	Montgomery	\$7,286,898
Montgomery	\$6,972,925	Potter	\$7,240,231
Bell	\$6,562,972	Jefferson	\$6,908,496
Potter	\$6,278,033	Ector	\$6,831,229
Midland	\$5,727,376	Midland	\$6,290,637
Jefferson	\$5,096,122	Travis	\$5,968,091
Gregg	\$4,649,616	Williamson	\$4,873,881

## Taskforce Reported Trends, Issues, and Concerns

The ABTPA grant funded taskforces are required to provide year end reports to help assess the scope of the problems of motor vehicle burglary and theft. This report allows them to provide the ABTPA with major issues and obstacles in combating motor vehicle burglary and theft in their communities across Texas. Below is a broad summary of their reports:

### Most significant trends regarding BMV reported by taskforces:

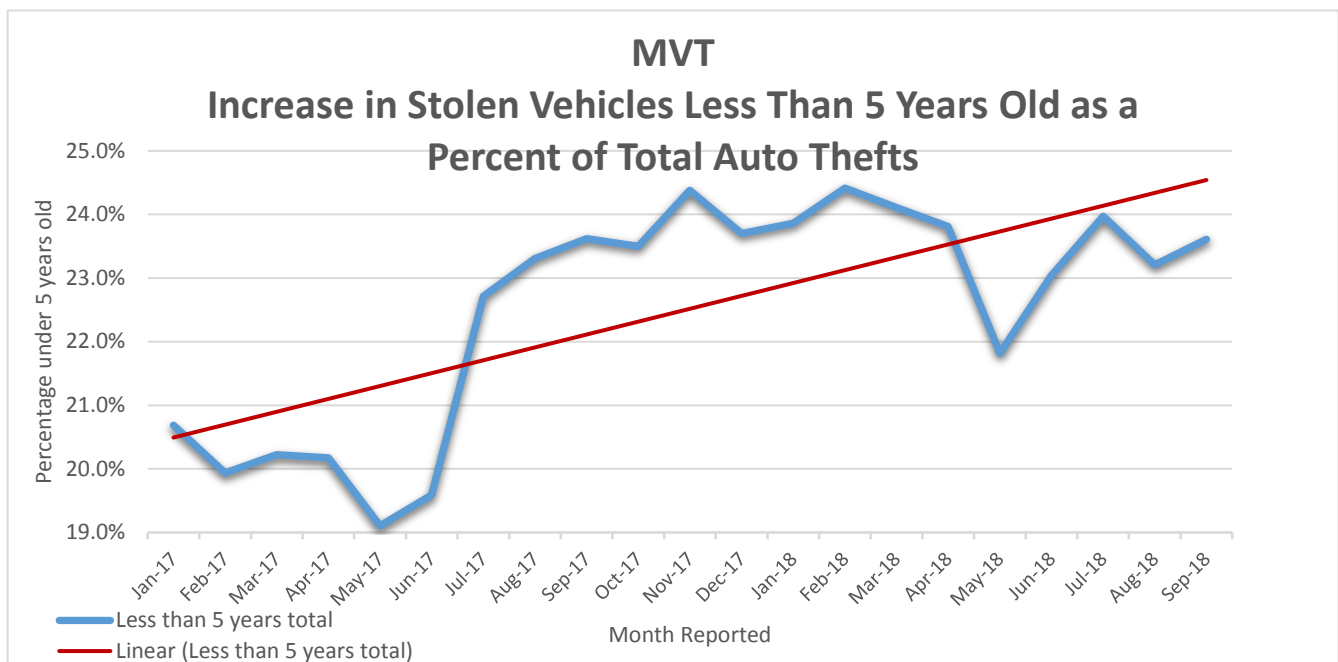
- about two-thirds indicated victim assisted crime (e.g. door unlocked);
- over one third identified firearms being stolen out of motor vehicle.

### Most significant trends regarding MVT reported by taskforces:

- about one third indicated the involvement of organized crime;
- about one third indicated major issues with victim assisted crimes (e.g. keys left in or near car);
- about one third reported fraud and theft by deception (titles, rental and purchases).

### General significant influences or causes of motor vehicle burglary and theft reported by taskforces:

- most taskforces indicated victim assistance was the major influence on burglarized and stolen vehicles;
- most reported combating organized crime and pattern crime;
- half reported BMV/MVT relationship with drug related activity;
- many reported violent crime and human trafficking as a major influence in the commission of MVT crime;
- many reported that new technology was used to open cars to steal items
- many reported that new technology was uses to steal cars
- many reported that social media was used to make money on the stolen items and cars;
- many reported an increase in stolen motor vehicles being sold on internet websites market applications;
- many reported increases in rental businesses being targeted by organized theft rings using fraudulent credit cards;
- many reported vehicles stolen from car dealerships and auto auctions by getting access to the key or key fob;
- many reported high impacts from prolific offenders;
- several reported difficulties in securing prosecution for BMV/MVT (even for prolific offenders);
- many reported increases in the number and percent of new cars stolen.



Source: TxDPS Monthly Auto Theft Reports

## Gangs and Prolific Offenders

Another major component of the scope of the motor vehicle burglary and theft crime problem is that the ABTPA taskforces spend significant time interrupting organized crime networks and prolific offender enterprises. One-third of taskforces indicated organized crime was a major cause and influence of motor vehicle theft in their communities. Taskforces identified over 400 groups operating in motor vehicle theft operations. They identified over 1,100 offenders with three or more offenses of MVT and an additional 659 offenders with three or more offenses of BMV. Many of these gangs are transnational operations with ties in numerous countries outside of the United States (**US**). Others, like motorcycle gangs (Bandidos) and hate groups (Aryan Nation) operate simultaneously in many states. Taskforces also routinely identify and interdict local gangs that form primarily for economic benefit through motor vehicle crime. State funding and the ABTPA network support the cross agency communication needed to interrupt gangs and prolific offenders. The following gangs were identified by the ABTPA taskforces in FY18 operating motor vehicle burglary and/or theft enterprises in Texas:

Gangs Encountered by Taskforces		
18th Street	Cartel Del Noreste	North Dallas Vagos
415 bloods	Chuco Tango	Sinaloa Cartel
457 bloods	Eastside Homeboys	Surenos 13
65 Groveside	Ferguson 64	Tango Blast
Artistas Asesinos	Juarez Cartel	Texas Syndicate
Aryan Nation	La Linea	Local Juvenile Gangs
Bandidos MC Gang	Los Mexicles	
Barrio Azteca	Mexican Mafia	

## Border and Port Security

One concerning issues for the ABTPA and an indicator of a major problem is that over the last several years over 20,000 stolen vehicles per year have not been recovered by law enforcement, however, CY17 reports show that over 26,000 stolen vehicles in Texas were not recovered. Not all unrecovered stolen vehicles are taken to Mexico or removed out of the country through the ports, but many are. It is expected that ABTPA taskforces in Brownsville, Laredo, Eagle Pass and El Paso deal with border security issues routinely. Not expected is the frequency that ABTPA taskforces in Bexar, Harris, Nueces and Tarrant Counties all report investigating cases tied to or working with federal agencies on investigating these crimes. The taskforces report significant shortage of expertise and personnel at the federal level to combat the illegal export of vehicles from Texas without assistance. Criminal networks monitor the bridges for the presence of local law enforcement. ABTPA taskforces work diligently to check Vehicle Identification Number (**VIN**) numbers at bridges and ports but are not able to maintain local responsibilities and fully monitor these locations.

## Analysis - Methods of Combating the Problem

The mission of the ABTPA is to foster a statewide collaborative network to combat motor vehicle burglary and theft crime and to inform motor vehicle owners of methods that they can use to prevent these crimes. The ABTPA performs this mission by issuing grants to local law enforcement agencies, providing law enforcement investigator training, providing information and print material to the public and coordinating all activities with TxDMV, TxDPS and other state agencies.

### ABTPA Performance Measures

The ABTPA grant funded police and sheriff taskforces work to combat incidents and financial losses in their law enforcement activities. The ABTPA has statutory performance measures set by the Legislature (Texas Revised Civil Statutes Article 4413 (37) § 6(j)). Programs funded by the ABTPA track recovery of stolen vehicles, cleared cases, and persons arrested. The table below shows the taskforces' statutory performance measures to combat motor vehicle crime in FY18:

### Summary of Statewide FY 17/18 Statutory Requirements Reported by Grant Recipients

<b>Motor Vehicle Theft Performance Measures</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>FY 2017</b>	<b>FY 2018</b>	<b>Percentage Increase</b>
Recovered Stolen Vehicles	10,732	11,038	2.85%
Cleared Motor Vehicle Theft Cases	15,951	14,617	-8.36%
Persons Arrested Motor Vehicle Theft	2,931	3,295	12.42%
<b>Burglary of a Motor Vehicle Performance Measures</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>FY 2017</b>	<b>FY 2018</b>	<b>Percentage Increase</b>
Cleared Motor Vehicle Burglary Cases	5,801	3,425	-40.96%
Arrested Burglary of a Motor Vehicle	1,496	974	-34.89%

### Collaborative Law Enforcement Funding

The greatest resource the ABTPA has to combat statewide motor vehicle burglary and theft is to fund local law enforcement. Local law enforcement agencies rarely have specialized motor vehicle crime experts and corresponding equipment. The ABTPA grants allow local communities to have highly trained investigators performing specialized investigative tactics. The ABTPA works to leverage state funds with local resources to meet its statutory mandates and avoid supplanting of local expenditures. Taskforces and their local governments must provide at least a 20 percent cash match for any grant funds received. The ABTPA grants to local law enforcement programs are organized into motor vehicle burglary and theft law enforcement taskforces. Of the 24 taskforces funded in FY18, 10 taskforces are single jurisdiction and 14 are multijurisdictional. The single jurisdiction taskforces regularly provide coordination and effort outside their jurisdictional boundaries. The ABTPA incentivizes communities to use their resources in a coordinated effort for the benefit of the entire state.

In FY18, the ABTPA taskforces identified almost 14,000 events where they directly assisted another law enforcement agency investigating a motor vehicle theft, and over 2,500 times to other units in their own department or their coverage jurisdictions. There were another 10,000 events when they assisted other agencies investigating burglary of motor vehicle cases. One significant case involved three ABTPA taskforces (Austin Police Department Auto Burglary and Theft Interdiction Project taskforce, Harris County Sheriff's Auto Theft Unit taskforce and Tarrant Regional Auto Crimes Taskforce) worked with Grand Prairie police department to arrest several perpetrators in a major organized crime ring operating across the state. Law enforcement agencies with staff largely funded by the ABTPA are more likely to collaborate and extend more courtesies beyond their city or county limits to confront the highly mobile nature of motor vehicle crimes. The taskforces also use the ABTPA publications, messaging, copyrighted material and marketing products to communicate with their communities to help the public reduce motor vehicle burglary and theft. Most taskforces provide these items

to support surrounding communities. The taskforces and the ABTPA also communicate and collaborate with state agencies, community organizations, business groups and insurance stakeholders like National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) and Insurance Council of Texas to promote and expand the mission of the ABTPA.

### Investigators

The ABTPA FY18 grants supported 239 highly trained and specialized law enforcement investigators in communities across Texas. More than 85% of the ABTPA grant program expenditures are personnel costs for local law enforcement. The ABTPA provides the mission, contact network, communication, outreach, training coordination, advocacy, and specialized equipment for these investigators and their departments to maximize effectiveness. As local jurisdictions are provided state resources to cover much of their investigators' salaries, their agencies are more willing to allow coordination in investigations along with regional and statewide communication. The ABTPA funded investigators are familiar with the most advanced investigative techniques and the latest automotive technological trends. This level of expertise in law enforcement and motor vehicle technology is rarely available without state support.

### Specialized Equipment and Supplies

Specialized equipment used by motor vehicle crimes investigators include high-tech surveillance and recording devices, vehicle identification cameras and software, and bait trackers and bait marking technology. Some items purchased with the ABTPA grant funds would not be available to many local law enforcement agencies without state funding. Even when they purchased the technology most departments coordinate with ABTPA taskforces for the training to operate it.

Even with the ABTPA state funding, less than half of ABTPA taskforce vehicles are operating with license plate readers (LPR). LPRs are devices that can read license plates, connect to state and national lists of reported stolen vehicles and quickly identify to investigators a stolen vehicle in their vicinity. LPRs are also used to provide location intelligence to investigators about patterns where cars are stolen and recovered. LPR detections accounted for more than 16% of the vehicles recovered by the ABTPA investigators.

Surveillance systems can help identify and provide evidence on persons who commit motor vehicle burglaries and theft crimes. Tracking devices and GPS signal emitters are used to assist investigators locate stolen vehicles and equipment. Bait cars, bait equipment and bait markers provided by ABTPA grants help investigators increase the number of persons arrested and cases cleared in Texas. In addition, the ABTPA taskforces are routinely called upon to provide assistance and use of this special equipment to narcotics, robbery, and vice divisions.

The ABTPA taskforces have reported a greater need to use technology to provide prosecutors with more documentation, clearer recordings and better evidence. The trend impacting much of the criminal justice system is called the "CSI effect." This is where prosecutors, jurors, and the public expect that criminal investigation comport with dramatic television shows more than what investigators can often provide in real life. Specialized technology is increasingly a major factor in solving and prosecuting motor vehicle crime.

### Training

The ABTPA supports and coordinates with the taskforces the provision of excellent skills based training for current motor vehicle burglary and theft investigators in Texas. The ABTPA Board adopted curriculum was developed in coordination and with input from TxDMV, TxDPS, NICB, and Texas Association of Vehicle Theft Investigators (TAVTI). The training uses the most knowledgeable instructors and subject matter experts to teach the latest motor vehicle theft investigation techniques and technology. The training provide most of the required hours of Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) credit for law enforcement officers completing the courses.

The Intermediate Motor Vehicle Burglary and Theft Investigator and Advanced Motor Vehicle Burglary and Theft Investigator courses are available to currently licensed peace officers designated by their agency as a Motor Vehicle Burglary and Theft Investigators. Law enforcement officers must be recommended by their command staff as specialized investigators to be eligible to attend the training and to gain access to the proprietary and confidential information

contained in the training. The ABTPA training committee selects qualified instructors for all of the lessons provided. The ABTPA and the taskforces work to ensure quality and continuity for all classes. The investigators who completed the training and are specialized motor vehicle theft investigators receive access to the NICB confidential and proprietary databases. With this access they are authorized to perform confidential VIN inspections (also referred to as 68-A inspections) in accordance with the Texas Transportation Code and TxDMV rule.

### Techniques

The ABTPA law enforcement taskforces use many combinations of techniques to combat motor vehicle burglary and theft. Below is a limited list of techniques used by these taskforces, a brief illustration of the technique and a summary of taskforce usage from FY18:

#### *Investigation:*

The ABTPA funded investigators operate in specialized units that both investigate motor vehicle crimes reported by the public (reactive) and monitor and reduce community vulnerabilities to such crimes (proactive). Most ABTPA taskforces have many strong elements of proactive enforcement. All funded investigators work to recover stolen vehicles, arrest perpetrators, and clear open criminal cases as required by the ABTPA statute. Investigators write and examine reports, review and provide intelligence briefings, develop leads and witnesses, identify offenders and networks, identify and track criminal organizations, inform prosecutors and other agencies, and develop sources of information from victims, informants and community members.

One standout example from Harris County shows the time, coordination and expertise required to dismantle a sophisticated motor vehicle theft ring operated in many major cities in Texas. Harris County Sheriff's Office Auto Theft taskforce with TxDPS, Austin Police Department Taskforce, and the Grand Prairie Auto Theft Unit conducted a two-year multi agency investigation known as "Operation Slingshot." The criminal organization stole vehicles from dozens of dealerships and sold them through social media and on-line. This collaborative effort required skill, initiative and state resources to investigate, identify, and arrest multiple individuals in criminal organization across many jurisdictions. Investigators obtained 17 indictments on 9 defendants.

In FY18 the ABTPA funded investigators presented the results of their investigative efforts to prosecutors in over 4,700 cases. In the same period, investigators cleared 14,617 motor vehicle theft cases.

#### *Identify Vehicles:*

Motor vehicle burglary and theft investigators receive specialized training to identify motor vehicles and certain parts of motor vehicles. Manufacturers of vehicles, trailers, equipment and certain parts follow national and industry standards for marking and maintaining identification of their produced items. They jointly work with insurance companies and governments to maintain limited access proprietary databases most of which are managed by NICB. Properly credentialed law enforcement investigators use these databases to identify with certainty all vehicles, certain vehicle parts and most equipment. This proper identification is critical to owners to perform some Texas title transactions, establishing the elements of motor vehicle crime for prosecution purposes, and to recover vehicles where criminals have worked to remove, conceal or change the vehicle identity markings. The specialized skill in vehicle identification has been used to assist other law enforcement agencies in critical moments of shootings and human trafficking.

One recent example was where the Tri-County (Mansfield) taskforce received a request to assist the investigation from the Texas Sheriffs Combined Auto Theft taskforce (Travis County). A recovered truck from a salvage yard in Corsicana had its VIN switched with another vehicle. Mansfield worked with the local police department to conduct an inspection of this business. This law enforcement coordination and skill of identifying vehicles uncovered a massive VIN switching operation that had operated for several years in many major cities across the state. The suspects stole new, high end trucks from car dealerships throughout Texas, and then place VINs and other false identifiers onto the stolen vehicles.



In FY18, the ABTPA taskforce investigators performed 14,565 required confidential VIN inspections for the public to complete title transactions and over 35,000 more inspection to positively identify vehicles in search of stolen vehicles or to support legal businesses. Another 5,753 vehicles were inspected at bridges or ports prior to leaving the US.

#### *Communicate and Collaborate Across Jurisdictions*

To effectively combat motor vehicle crime and recover stolen property quickly, taskforces depend on communication and collaboration. The ABTPA taskforces perform their investigations with and across local, state and federal departments and jurisdictions. This is especially true when they work to identify and interrupt criminal enterprises. Taskforce investigators communicate with other taskforces, other law enforcement agencies, vehicle manufacturer representatives, insurance industry professionals, as well as motorists and families in the communities they serve. They receive and analyze intelligence that is provided through TxDPS Crime Information Centers and their own command structures. When taskforces identify patterns or suspects they share the information to leverage the information across jurisdictions. Investigators often share what they see and learn on social media platforms such as Facebook, Next-door, and Offer-up.

The ABTPA and taskforces communicate and collaborate with international, national and state organizations such as International Association of Auto Theft Investigators (IAATI), Auto Theft Prevention Authorities Committee (ATPAs) and TAVTI. These organizations provide the ABTPA and funded investigators direct access to communicate with manufacturers about vulnerabilities. Investigators receive information about new trends across the world and nation. Best practices to solve and prevent motor vehicle crime are promoted and developed to promote coordination.

As an example, the Lubbock County taskforce collaborated with the Lamb County Sheriff's Department to conduct a successful bait operation. The suspects stole the bait trailer / welder implanted with tracking devices and headed north. After their arrest it was learned that suspects were in route to Amarillo. The suspects' information was forwarded to the Panhandle Auto Theft taskforce for additional follow-up investigation.

In FY18, the ABTPA taskforces issued over 1,500 crime analysis bulletins, provided investigative assistance over 21,000 times outside their departments and additional 4,000 times inside of their departments.

#### *Identify Prolific Offenders*

Many motor vehicle burglary and theft crimes are committed by the same individuals or groups. These prolific offenders are identified by the taskforce investigators who spend time analyzing multiple streams of information. They review offense reports, witness statements, and intelligence briefings to identify these perpetrators. These prolific offenders usually commit a disproportionate number of motor vehicle crimes. The ABTPA taskforces reported high volume per case of weapons charges, credit card thefts and other fraud cases when the crime was committed by prolific offenders.

The investigator in one case from the Beaumont Southeast Auto Theft taskforce, filed four counts of Burglary of a Motor Vehicle on a prolific offender that had 13 prior convictions of BMV. Tarrant County had one unusual case where investigators knew the prolific offender's pattern and collected DNA evidence tying him to 21 cases.

The ABTPA taskforces identified 1,827 offenders who were linked to motor vehicle burglary and theft offenses more than 3 times in FY18.

#### *Business Support*

Taskforces conduct inspections of salvage yards, recycling centers, rebuilders and other motor vehicle related businesses. When stolen vehicles and parts are identified the taskforces work with local businesses to identify and interrupt the criminal network that brought the stolen items into the system. Taskforces also work to shut down illegal operations that dismantle stolen motor vehicles and parts, which are often referred to as "chop shops". Illegal operations undermine legitimate businesses throughout the state.



The Heart of Texas Auto Theft taskforce was contacted by TxDMV and asked to conduct a criminal investigation spanning four counties on a licensed salvage dealer. TxDMV alleged that he did not report vehicles he was selling to a metal recycler in Waco. The investigation revealed that beyond failure to report violations, many stolen vehicles were being delivered to the recycler. The case resulted in the arrest and indictments of 3 suspects, recovery of 17 stolen vehicles, and documentation that the suspects made \$3,000,000 in over 2,000 transactions. A local news article about the arrests quoted a nearby business owner lamenting the harm done to his legitimate business.

In FY18, taskforces reported they conducted inspections at 1,660 motor vehicle related businesses.

### *Technology*

The methods for thieves to illegally reap economic gain out of stolen vehicle and parts have become more sophisticated because of technology. To keep pace with those methods, investigators develop more sophisticated techniques to identify and arrest offenders who burglarize and steal motor vehicles. The taskforces use bait cars, bait trailers, bait equipment, license plate readers, surveillance equipment, and, when authorized by courts, tracking devices. This technology and the expertise needed to successfully utilize it is critical to increasing recoveries of stolen vehicles, increasing clearance rates, and stopping criminals through arrests.

For example, some criminal organizations specialize in stealing electronic control modules (**ECM**) from vehicles. The ECM is essentially the computer of a vehicle. In large trucks, an ECM can be worth up to \$6,000. The City of Dallas taskforce used advanced technology to stop a string of ECM thefts on newer vehicles. They placed a tracker on a vehicle and a pole camera at a suspected chop shop. Another taskforce recovered 10 ECM sensors with an approximate value of \$61,000. Investigators successfully identified 8 of these 10 ECMs as stolen and linked them to specific case numbers.

In FY18, taskforces deployed bait equipment 4,406 times. They deployed their LPRs 2,803 and recovered 1,786 vehicles.

### *Border and Port Enforcement*

Some of the ABTPA taskforces have always been very active preventing vehicles from leaving the US along Texas' border with Mexico or through the ports. These taskforces operated bridge and port inspections. The 85<sup>th</sup> Legislature earmarked \$5.6 million of ABTPA's biennial appropriation. Additional reporting requirements for the ABTPA related to border and port security were added. The ABTPA designated all grant funded taskforces along the US / Mexico border and grants touching Texas' Intercostal Waterway as Border and Port grants. The ABTPA taskforces coordinate efforts to combat motor vehicle crime along the border and along Texas' Intercostal Waterway including the Port of Houston. The work to discover and interrupt criminal networks moving stolen vehicles to and across the border or out of the ports. The coordination promoted by the ABTPA taskforces has helped local agencies think more regionally to solve motor vehicle theft and recover more vehicles.

The Laredo Police Department's Auto Theft taskforce in Operation Full Throttle coordinated with the Texas Department of Public Safety Criminal Investigations Division (TxDPS CID), US Border Patrol (North and South), Homeland Security Investigations, Border Patrol Joint Targeting Team, and the Texas Office of the Attorney General to investigate the case. They arrested many members of a major transnational gangs stealing cars based on orders from people outside of the US. Some of the arrested perpetrators had previously been deported.

In FY18, taskforces reported 588 collaborations with United States Customs and Border Patrol, 343 along the Texas/Mexico Border. Another 756 collaborations were with other state and federal agencies.

## Public Education and Awareness

Texas consistently ranks high in the US for motor vehicle thefts and the number of crimes where keys are left in the vehicle or the vehicle was unlocked. To reduce simple mistakes like this, taskforces spend a great deal of time and effort conducting prevention and public awareness programs. The distributed over 13,000 report cards to inform the public on how well they did to prevent motor vehicle crime. The taskforce investigators and staff communicate with citizen and neighborhood groups and homeowners associations. They make appearances and provide presentations at stock shows, county fairs, civic organizations, racing events. Finally, they provide advertising, road signs, public service announcements and billboards all in an effort to harden citizen targets against motor vehicle crimes. The ABTPA taskforces committed to increased education and awareness provided over 1,000 different engagements in FY18 to inform the public on how they can help reduce motor vehicle crime. The ABTPA staff provided statewide coordination for brochures, reminder items and other printed material to support their effort.

## Plan for Providing Financial Support

### Grant Funding Accountability

The ABTPA has a successful program of grant administration that follows the requirements set in statute and the Uniform Grant Management Standards promulgated by the Comptroller of Public Accounts (**CPA**). More than 95% of funds are used to directly fund law enforcement programs and educate the public on how to prevent motor vehicle burglary and theft. Cities and counties provided additional local funds of \$11.2 million cash match and \$6.5 million in-kind match (for a total of \$17.7 million) in FY17. These spending rates show that local law enforcement is committed and that the ABTPA grant program is a cost effective method to support the state's interest in combating motor vehicle burglary and theft crime.

### Compliance with ABTPA Motor Vehicle Insurance Fee

A fee of \$2 per motor vehicle insurance policy is assessed by law (Texas Revised Civil Statutes Art. 4413(37) Sec. 10) to support the ABTPA activities. The fee collected by the ABTPA is deposited to the General Revenue Fund, and state law specifies that 50% of each fee may only be appropriated for ABTPA purpose. The ABTPA is working with the CPA, Texas Department of Insurance (**TDI**), insurance companies and insurance industry trade associations to ensure all motor vehicle insurers are in full compliance with the law regarding the collection of the ABTPA fee. The ABTPA Board is required by law to notify TDI if an insurer fails to pay the fee. The ABTPA works to maintain equitable collection of the fee to serve communities, avoid losses, and to avoid competitive advantage going to companies that do not pay the required fee. The ABTPA Board has directed staff to improve the collection of the fees. The ABTPA staff will continue to compare ABTPA fee collection reports to other tax and industry filings made by insurers to the CPA and TDI. The ABTPA works to determine that insurers have paid the proper amounts. The ABTPA expects to collect about \$49.5 million in FY19. In FY18, the ABTPA collected over \$49 million in fees and was appropriated \$12.8 million.

### The ABTPA Plan to Combat Crime

The ABTPA Board approved the following priorities in the FY20-21 biennium:

- Promote the use of funds received by the ABTPA as the most cost effective method for the State to enhance local law enforcement to combat multijurisdictional and complex motor vehicle related crimes, and to reduce economic losses to the public.
- Expand law enforcement taskforces (number of investigators, equipment and geographic coverage area) to ensure the entire state has access to highly specialized and trained auto-theft investigators. This will significantly reduce motor vehicle crime, disrupt criminal enterprises, improve responses to victims, and better serve the motoring public with required motor vehicle transaction services.
- Develop specialized funding programs to improve data analysis, technology driven investigation and dedicated prosecution of motor vehicle crimes in support of the ABTPA taskforces, TxDMV, local Tax Assessor Collectors and the CPA.
- Educate the public on ways to prevent motor vehicle crime.

The ABTPA Board will request the Legislature to consider:

- Depositing the amount of funds that the Legislature appropriates to the ABTPA into the TxDMV Fund for appropriation from the fund and unexpended balance authority to help the ABTPA combat motor vehicle theft and burglary.
- To provide funding to implement the Sunset Advisory Commission recommendation to authorize the ABTPA grants to fund efforts to “combat a broader range of motor vehicle crimes, such as title and odometer fraud, beyond just automobile burglary and theft.” This could also include other motor vehicle crime such as insurance fraud, cargo theft, other types of vehicles, VIN switching and cloning, etc.

### Current Law Enforcement Taskforces

The ABTPA is committed to providing law enforcement grants to increase law enforcement investigators in the motor vehicle burglary and theft taskforces. The statute requires the ABTPA provide funds primarily on the incidence of motor

vehicle burglary and theft. The ABTPA funds taskforces in all the most populous counties in Texas. The exact nature of the support provided to law enforcement in the next biennium will ultimately be determined by a combination of the funds that are appropriated and the needs expressed in the grant applications. The chart below shows the law enforcement grants funded in FY18:

ABTPA FY2018 Grant Awards		
	Single/Multi-Agency Taskforce	Amount Awarded
City of Beaumont	Multi-Agency	\$528,714
City of Brownsville	Multi-Agency	\$924,350
Burnet County	Multi-Agency	\$276,734
Dallas County	Multi-Agency	\$840,697
Galveston County	Multi-Agency	\$469,183
City of Houston	Multi-Agency	\$809,496
Lubbock County	Multi-Agency	\$404,523
City of Mansfield	Multi-Agency	\$360,058
Montgomery County	Multi-Agency	\$337,464
Potter County	Multi-Agency	\$361,705
City of San Antonio	Multi-Agency	\$792,617
Smith County	Multi-Agency	\$332,792
Tarrant County	Multi-Agency	\$1,145,500
Travis County	Multi-Agency	\$631,137
City of Austin	Single	\$430,685
City of Corpus Christi	Single	\$410,973
City of Dallas	Single	\$555,204
City of Eagle Pass	Single	\$151,222
City of El Paso	Single	\$929,465
Harris County	Single	\$1,272,403
City of Laredo	Single	\$637,768
City of Paris	Single	\$106,709
City of Pasadena	Single	\$76,000
City of Victoria	Single	\$154,719

Improve Law Enforcement Coverage and Strength

**Add more trained and specialized motor vehicle crime investigators to combat economic losses in areas of Texas not currently served**

**Provide full-time specialized Criminal Intelligence Analysts for all regions**

**Provide funds for new Law Enforcement Technologists and specialized technology**

**Provide web based command and communication systems to improve collaboration, intelligence gathering, and data sharing among auto theft units and with state agencies**

**Provide for increased availability of VIN inspections to TxDMV and local TACs**

The ABTPA taskforces cover a significant portion of the geography of Texas. There are still large areas of the state that the ABTPA has not had sufficient or any resources to cover. Areas around Abilene, Alice, Angleton, Bryan, College Station, Del Rio, Denton, Longview, Lufkin, Midland, Nacogdoches, Odessa, San Angelo, Sherman, Sweetwater, Texarkana, Waco and Wichita Falls do not have dedicated ABTPA funded specialized motor vehicle crime investigators. The ABTPA taskforces need additional investigators and resources to cover the state for the methods above to be fully effective and reduce motor vehicle crime.

The ABTPA taskforces provide most VIN inspections in the state whether required by statute, rule or local Tax Assessor Collector policy. The taskforces perform this service even for people from counties outside of their jurisdiction. Several

taskforces operate routine VIN inspection events in counties outside their taskforce area just to meet the public need. Taskforces report that they have insufficient personnel for the volume and number of VIN inspections they are asked to perform by the public. The time they have to conduct criminal investigations is reduced if they try to meet the demands of the public for these inspections. These inspections are often required by statute. Following instruction to develop needs based funding plans in FY18, the ABTPA taskforces applied for grants totaling more than \$17 million. The ABTPA was only able to award \$11.1 in FY18 funds.

#### *Motor Vehicle Burglary and Theft Investigators*

The ABTPA requests funds to award grants for law enforcement agencies to hire up to 70 additional full-time law enforcement investigators to combat motor vehicle crime. Law enforcement agencies that participate in the ABTPA grant programs can greatly reduce motor vehicle burglary and theft and their financial losses with more investigators, better intelligence processing, increased technological expertise and improved coordination. The ABTPA estimates that an additional **25 investigators** need to be placed in the existing taskforces to meet current needs and to make significant reductions in motor vehicle crime.

The **Sunset Advisory Commission** has made a recommendation to broaden the ABTPA's role to include other motor vehicle crime in support of local communities and TxDMV. If this recommendation is enacted by the Legislature, then current grant funded investigators will be authorized to pursue additional criminal activity that adversely impacts the State's interest but are currently not investigated by existing ABTPA taskforces. The ABTPA has identified about **45 investigators** are needed to meet this scope expansion. The grant funded positions may be added to cover new roles or areas in existing taskforces or to create new taskforces where there is no coverage or access to coverage. These new investigators will be primarily dedicated to combating motor vehicle burglary and theft under law. They will be able to detect and apprehend other economic motor crime contemplated in the expanded scope. The tremendous increases in economic losses from motor vehicle burglary and theft and the entire adverse impact of motor vehicle crime supports this request.

The ABTPA Request for Application (**RFA**) process will require that local law enforcement agencies who apply for grants must create additional specialized and trained motor vehicle burglary and theft investigator positions dedicated to multijurisdictional motor vehicle crime taskforces. The ABTPA will provide the coordination to help current programs and investigators train the new programs and investigators to develop the operational techniques and specialized skills. All investigators will be employed by local law enforcement agencies and will be certified peace officers. The RFA process allows local law enforcement agencies to develop and request funding for a variety of positions, organization configurations as long as they demonstrate that they meet the state's interest in reducing motor vehicle crime. New roles and positions may be created in taskforces to: 1) provide web based command, data sharing and communication systems; 2) improve collaboration; and 3) improve intelligence gathering. Taskforces may apply to provide increased availability of VIN inspections to TxDMV and local TACs. The ABTPA will apply its established local cash match requirements for these programs and activities.

#### *ABTPA Criminal Intelligence Analysts*

The ABTPA requests funds to award grants for taskforces to hire up to seven full-time criminal intelligence analysts. The RFA for grants would require local communities to create positions that improve gathering, coordination and communication of criminal intelligence across jurisdictions to detect and apprehend motor vehicle burglary and theft offenders. Local law enforcement would be permitted to develop a variety of position configurations if they meet the state's interest in reducing motor vehicle crime. Providing criminal intelligence analysts into taskforces is crucial to fight motor vehicle crime. Intelligence will be used to enhance the investigators currently working to combat motor vehicle crime. Analyst will help investigators and their departments reduce motor vehicle crime. The analysts will be required to meet professional and law enforcement standards before being provided access to confidential databases and information. The ABTPA will apply its established local cash match requirements for these programs and activities.

#### *ABTPA Law Enforcement Technologists*

The ABTPA requests funds to award grants for taskforces to hire up to seven full-time Law Enforcement Technologists (**LETs**). Taskforces would be able to develop new technologist positions and seek funding for new ideas and expansion of

law enforcement in the digital age. The RFA for grants would require taskforces create positions that support taskforces with specialized automobile cybersecurity, forensic evidence collection, intelligence gathering, or exploration of new technologies to track and interrupt criminal enterprises. Positions for data analytics and predictive analytics (artificial intelligence) to detect and expose fraud in all types of motor vehicle crimes would be authorized. Some jurisdictions may develop positions to use the electronic interface of motor vehicles, infotainment systems and the Internet of Things (IoT) to identify manufacturer vulnerabilities and to inform taskforce investigators.

Taskforces would be permitted to develop a variety of position configurations as long as it meets the state's interest in reducing motor vehicle crime. The need for these positions became strongly evident in FY18 as taskforces identified a highly organized new pattern of crimes stealing new vehicles starting in Dallas and spreading quickly to other parts of the state. Very few of these stolen high-end vehicle have been recovered and the manufacturer's suggested fixes are reported to be years away. The LET positions would be able to discover and use technological advances to improve bait systems, tracking systems and surveillance systems to aid local law enforcement. The LETs will be required to meet specialized technological education and law enforcement standards before being provided access to confidential databases and information. The ABTPA will apply its established local cash match requirements for these programs and activities.

### Specialized Motor Vehicle Crime Prosecutors

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#### **Provide funding for specialized motor vehicle crime prosecutors**

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#### **Provide motor vehicle crime specific training to local prosecutors**

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The ABTPA requests funds to award grants to hire up to seven full-time local prosecutors dedicated to the prosecution of motor vehicle burglary and theft crimes. The RFA for grants would be issued to allow county or district attorneys to apply as part of an ABTPA taskforce application or separate from any taskforce. The ABTPA board may give priority to taskforce affiliated applications. The seven full-time prosecutors would focus on prosecuting motor vehicle burglary and theft crime. Funded prosecutors will consult with local law enforcement on methods to improve evidence collection, investigations, and case outcomes. Grant funded prosecutors may also train and consult with other prosecutors across the state. Multi-jurisdictional and transnational organized crime prosecution will be a priority. Grant conditions would provide that grant-funded prosecutor programs work to improve the ABTPA's statutory performance measures (i.e., arrests, recoveries, and cleared cases). ABTPA will develop additional performance measures, such as number of indictments or prosecutions.

If the Sunset Advisory Commission staff recommendation to expand the statutory authority for the use of the ABTPA grant funds is adopted, prosecutors would be authorized to pursue the expanded scope of motor vehicle crimes. This expansion could include title and registration fraud, odometer fraud, insurance fraud, motor vehicle sales tax evasion, vehicle theft by fictitious identity and other related motor vehicle crime. The State of Texas will especially obtain more effective prosecution by providing funds to support motor vehicle crimes that have direct cost to the state. Better and more frequent prosecution of motor vehicle crimes strengthens local communities, improves the confidence of people in their government, and acts as a deterrent against these crimes. The ABTPA will apply its established local cash match requirements for these programs and activities.

## Inform Motor Vehicle Owners of Methods to Prevent Motor Vehicle Burglary or Theft.

### **Conduct education campaigns based on research and effectiveness**

#### **Provide improved coordination of education program and research efforts between insurance, law enforcement and the public**

The ABTPA requests funds to adequately reduce incidents of victim assisted motor vehicle burglary and theft through educating the public how they can prevent becoming a victim of motor vehicle crime. The ABTPA will develop target hardening strategies, publications, coordinated statewide messaging, marketing and commercials to engage the public. The ABTPA taskforces will examine VIN etching for windows and other marking techniques to support local law enforcement get out the “Watch Your Car” message. The ABTPA will apply its established local cash match requirements for these programs and activities.

## Provide Experimental Equipment to Assist Motor Vehicle Owners Prevent Motor Vehicle Burglary or Theft.

### **Purchase and distribute new technology such as immobilizer systems, tracking devices, and drone surveillance**

#### **Develop databases and technology to connect readings at inspection stations and toll systems to law enforcement stolen lists**

The ABTPA requests funding to demonstrate whether existing or new products could be effective tools to prevent or quickly detect motor vehicle crime. The ABTPA enabling statute provides that the ABTPA can establish pilot programs to demonstrate the most effective methods to prevent motor vehicle burglary and theft. Prevention requires an interruption between the thief and the targeted item. There are new technologies and products developed to cause interruption or prompt detection of criminal activity. The ABTPA has identified several products capable of interrupting commission of a motor vehicle crime. One example for motor vehicle theft is the purchase and distribution of new ignition system interruption technologies that are very effective in high crime areas and on fleet vehicles. A portion of the proposed additional requested funds will be used to harden the most vulnerable targets of vehicle crimes by providing specific technology and education to reduce victimization of vulnerable populations and neighborhoods. The ABTPA will provide specific high crime communities and neighborhoods with emerging technologies like car data port devices, tracking technology, and web and smart phone applications to reduce motor vehicle burglary and theft. Another area that can be developed by the ABTPA and other state agencies is connecting motor vehicle On-Board Diagnostic (OBD) readings at safety and emissions inspection stations to law enforcement stolen vehicle lists. Once piloted technology is determined effective it can be made available to the public through commercial means.

The ABTPA can work with taskforces to improve burglary investigation and increase crime prevention resources. Texas communities often experience major spikes in vehicle burglaries in one area for a short duration. The crime then quickly moves to neighboring communities. Law enforcement agencies use high costs methods like increased patrols, installation of pole surveillance cameras or elevated surveillance platforms. The ABTPA’s proposal will explore methods to share technology across regions through resource colocation arrangements. Taskforces would purchase and deploy mobile technology when major events (i.e. bike rallies, concerts, etc.) or when local BMV outbreaks occur.

## Prevent Stolen Motor Vehicles from Entering Mexico

### **Support local law enforcement efforts to host voluntary self-registration tracking or title management technology to prevent exit of vehicles from the US**

#### **Provide funds to expand law enforcement agencies intelligence sharing along US / Mexico border**

The ABTPA request funds to take advantage of technological advancements to provide owners with resources and technology to prevent stolen vehicles from entering Mexico. The ABTPA would work to support voluntary self-registration radio-frequency identification (RFID) technology to track vehicles with an owner option to notify law enforcement if the



vehicle is operated outside of set parameters (e.g., near a border crossing). The ABTPA would like to support communities along the border to develop new RFID technology with geo-fencing. This and expanded coordination will reduce stolen vehicles from entering Mexico. The ABTPA staff already coordinates communication through intelligence meetings with taskforces in strategic locations. The ABTPA has identified the need for law enforcement to increase cross training with other areas of the state, create virtual command centers and provide border conferences to improve communication along the border. The ABTPA will apply its established local cash match requirements for these programs and activities.

### Border and Port Security

The 85<sup>th</sup> Legislature earmarked \$5.6 million of appropriated funds to the ABTPA to provide enhanced border and port security for Texas. The requirement under the General Appropriations Act Article IX, Section 7.11 provided the ABTPA opportunities for improved reporting and added some reporting requirements for taskforces located in designated counties. Some jurisdictions routinely performed activities in the ports on along the Texas/Mexico Border. The earmark and designation is likely to continue and ABTPA taskforces will continue to expand their capabilities in apprehensions, indictments, recovered vehicles and drug seizures.

### Improve Coordination

The ABTPA is committed to continuing to improve coordination among stakeholders to leverage existing resources to fulfill its mission. TxDMV has placed three of its investigators in with ABTPA taskforces. The ABTPA includes TxDMV personnel and material in law enforcement training. In addition, the ABTPA has coordinated with TxDMV to provide training sessions for the NICB auto theft schools. The TxDMV has coordinated through the ABTPA with taskforces to work closely to combat title fraud and other methods of converting stolen motor vehicles into economic gain.

The ABTPA is committed to improving the grant program data collection and analysis. The ABTPA has improved and streamlined the reporting processes associated with its grants. A greater emphasis on statutory performance measures and program and fiscal monitoring has been established between the ABTPA and the taskforces. The border and port security measures for the LBB will continue to improve. Finally, better communication between TxDPS and the ABTPA has produced an increased understanding regarding vehicle recovery, arrest data, and cleared cases. The ABTPA will also help taskforces and other law enforcement agencies improve and develop communication tools by promoting virtual command centers and regional intelligence briefings.

### Insurance Industry Cooperation

Insurance companies and insurance associations often provide taskforces with resources such as bait cars, targeted grants, equipment and crime prevention parking lot signs. Currently, there is no method to coordinate these efforts to avoid duplication and ensure the broadest possible coverage. The ABTPA has begun dialog with the insurance companies and associations to promote the best use of resources and to determine areas that the grant funding and operations can be coordinated for maximum effectiveness. The ABTPA also seeks to work with the insurance industry to develop education programs and to implement new technologies that potentially provide insurance cost reduction for consumers. For example, if the ABTPA can demonstrate that a pilot program involving new technology was effective, then coordination with the insurance industry may result in discounts or incentives for consumers to help expand the technology and reduce motor vehicle burglary and theft.

### Continue Promoting and Providing Motor Vehicle Theft Investigator Training

The ABTPA will continue to manage the Intermediate and Advanced Motor Vehicle Burglary and Theft Investigator training programs. The expertise regarding motor vehicle burglary and theft investigations is now centered in local law enforcement agencies, specifically ABTPA funded taskforces. The ABTPA, in partnership with the TxDMV, TxDPS, NICB, and TAVTI will continue the training program and update materials as needed. The ABTPA taskforces report that the coordination of the ABTPA network and the specially trained personnel are the most beneficial aspects of the ABTPA program.



## Estimate of Funds Required to Implement Plan

The ABTPA has determined that to approximately maintain the current taskforce strength and to approximately maintain the current levels of incidents and losses from motor vehicle burglary and theft crime will require continued appropriations at the current biennium level of not less than \$12.8 million per year. The Legislative Budget Board (LBB) and the Office of Management and Budget in the Office of the Governor (OMB) instructed TxDMV to submit a FY20-21 Base Funding Appropriation for ABTPA of \$19.4 million per year. The \$19.4 million amount is sufficient to fully implement this Plan of Operation provided above. If the Legislature fully funds the requests outlined in this Plan of Operation, Texans will benefit from a significant decrease in the motor vehicle burglary and theft rate.

The Sunset Advisory Commission proposed an expansion to the scope of the use of ABTPA grant funds. The ABTPA submitted an additional exceptional item request of \$5 million per year to implement this expansion to other motor vehicle crimes. This FY20-21 Plan of Operation has explained the activities the funding will support, but the chart below provides a summary:

<b>FY20-21 ABTPA Plan of Operation Request</b>			
<b>Appropriation</b>	<b>FY20</b>	<b>FY21</b>	<b>Contingent Amounts Per Year</b>
<b>Base Funding Appropriation Request</b>	\$19,458,902	\$19,458,902	\$19,458,902
<b>Proposed Expenses to Meet ABTPA Plan of Operation Activities</b>			
<b>Current Grant Programs and ABTPA Administration</b>		\$12,940,000	\$12,940,000
<b>New Motor Vehicle Crime Law Enforcement Investigators</b>		\$2,247,500	\$2,247,500
<b>New Criminal Intelligence Analysts</b>		\$453,600	\$453,600
<b>New Law Enforcement Technologists</b>		\$604,800	\$604,800
<b>New Specialized Motor Vehicle Crime Prosecutors</b>		\$945,000	\$945,000
<b>Vehicles, Equipment, Supplies, and basic operations</b>		\$1,015,475	\$1,015,475
<b>Communication, Crime Prevention, &amp; Pilot Projects</b>		\$1,252,527	\$1,252,527
		<b>\$19,458,902</b>	<b>\$19,458,902</b>
<b>Exceptional Item Request - Sunset Related</b>			
<b>New/Expand Taskforces - Motor Vehicle Crime in Texas</b>			
<b>Additional Motor Vehicle Crime Law Enforcement Investigators</b>	\$4,045,500		
<b>Vehicles, Equipment, Supplies, and basic operations</b>	\$1,011,375		
<b>Total Law Enforcement Expansion for Sunset</b>		<b>\$5,056,875</b>	<b>\$5,056,875</b>
<b>Total ABTPA Appropriation Request FY20-21</b>		<b>\$24,515,777</b>	<b>\$24,515,777</b>
<b>Estimated Revenue Collected by ABTPA - Auto Theft Fee</b>		<b>\$49,083,184</b>	<b>\$49,500,000</b>
<b>Auto Theft Fee Balance Remaining to GR</b>		<b>\$24,567,407</b>	<b>\$24,984,223</b>



Texas Automobile Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority

4000 Jackson Avenue

Austin, Texas 78731

512-465-1485

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