



PRESS RELEASE

Colorado Department of Law
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ATTORNEY GENERAL SUTHERS REACTS TO PASSAGE OF COLORADO ‘CHOP SHOP’ LEGISLATION

DENVER —Senate Bill 14-176, the Crimes Related to Motor Vehicles bill has passed the General Assembly and now awaits signature by the governor. If enacted, Colorado will join the company of fourteen other states and the federal government that have “[chop shop](#)” statutes. The FBI reports that in 2008, more than \$6.4 billion was lost nationwide due to motor vehicle theft with an average loss per stolen vehicle totaling \$6,751. While car theft touches all Coloradans by keeping insurance rates higher than they otherwise should be, Coloradans who live in places with especially high theft rates, like Denver, are especially hurt.

The Attorney General [Auto Theft Initiative](#) that prosecutes organized theft rings identified a weakness in existing law. Currently, Colorado law requires prosecutors to link each individual stolen car back to the person accused of stealing it. Prosecutors also must prove each vehicle’s value and establish an aggravated factor making existing law inadequate at stopping chop shops from operating. Chop-shop owners typically distance themselves from the stolen car making existing statute ineffective at preventing this type of criminal activity. SB14-176 creates a comprehensive statutory scheme that specifically targets and criminalizes the sophisticated and specialized behavior involved in stealing and parting vehicles for profit. Once law, those who commit such crimes will be charged with a Class Four Felony for operating a chop shop and the recovered cars would be evidence of that crime.

Colorado Attorney General John Suthers issued the following reactive statement.

“More than 11,000 motor vehicles were stolen in Colorado in 2012 and that’s a \$74.2 million problem that this bill addresses. I credit Representative Carole Murray with passage and thank Representative Lois Court and Senator Michael Johnston for their hard work getting SB14-176 passed. I urge Governor Hickenlooper to now sign it.”

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