



**State Headquarters**  
2966 Woodward Avenue  
Detroit, MI 48201  
Phone 313.578.6800  
Fax 313.578.6811  
E-mail [aclu@aclumich.org](mailto:aclu@aclumich.org)  
[www.aclumich.org](http://www.aclumich.org)

**Legislative Office**  
115 West Allegan Street  
Lansing, MI 48933  
Phone 517.372.8503  
Fax 517.372.5121  
E-mail [aclu@aclumich.org](mailto:aclu@aclumich.org)  
[www.aclumich.org](http://www.aclumich.org)

**West Michigan Regional Office**  
1514 Wealthy St. SE, Suite 260  
Grand Rapids, MI 49506  
Phone 616.301.0930  
Fax 616.301.0640  
Email [aclu@aclumich.org](mailto:aclu@aclumich.org)  
[www.aclumich.org](http://www.aclumich.org)

**House Criminal Justice Committee**  
**February 6, 2024**  
**House Bills 5182 and 5183: Oppose**

The American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan testifies today in opposition to House Bills 5182 and 5183.

While we recognize that car theft has been an increasing concern in Michigan, these bills cast too wide a net. HB 5182 would make it a felony punishable by imprisonment of up to five years for stealing any item from a vehicle, not just the theft of the vehicle itself. This varies from current law, which prescribes penalties based on the value of the items stolen from the vehicle. For example, MCL 750.356a, Section 2(a) states that *If the value of the property is less than \$200.00, the person is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than 93 days or a fine of not more than \$500.00 or 3 times the value of the property, whichever is greater, or both imprisonment and a fine.* The penalties increase as the value of the property increases. The only difference between the current statute and HB 5182 is the use of tools to break into the vehicle. What this means in practice is that someone who simply smashes a window to steal change from a vehicle may face a misdemeanor charge, while someone who uses a tool or device to enter the vehicle and steal the same amount of money could be found guilty of a felony and spend up to five years in prison.

I urge you to reconsider the proposed bills and explore alternatives that address the concerns around car theft with a "right size" approach. Balancing the severity of penalties with the nature of the offense is crucial to maintaining a fair legal system that upholds justice and appropriately addresses the issue at hand.

In conclusion, the ACLU of Michigan opposes House Bills 5182 and 5183 due to the overly broad approach they take in addressing the issue of car theft. Car theft is a legitimate concern; however, these bills propose drastic changes that extend beyond the theft of the vehicle itself.

Thank you for your time.

**Gabrielle Dresner, Policy Strategist**  
**ACLU of Michigan**  
**[gdresner@aclumich.org](mailto:gdresner@aclumich.org), (906) 486-4526**