



# INCREASE THE FELONY-LARCENY THRESHOLD TO \$1500 OR MORE



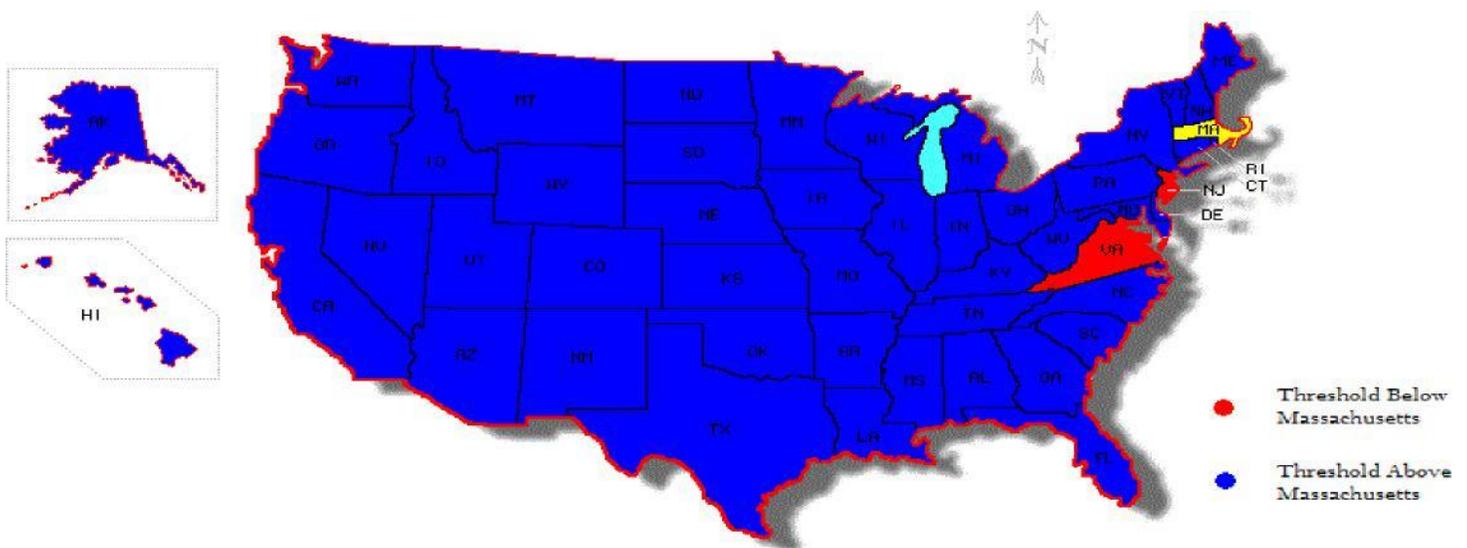
An increase in the amount needed to trigger a felony in larceny cases is long overdue. The present \$250 threshold is unjust because it captures too many low level offenses and makes felons of countless people, including young people and vulnerable populations with addictions.

Any felony on one's CORI carries a heavy stigma, creates barriers to jobs, and increases reliance on public assistance. There also is a 10 year waiting period to seal these low level offenses because the cases are classified as felonies. Increasing the threshold to \$1500 would change the lives of many people trapped in poverty and unemployment for what were actually low level offenses.

## MASSACHUSETTS IS AN OUTLIER

- Every state in the U.S. has a higher amount except New Jersey (\$200) and Virginia (\$200).
- Comparable New England states with urban populations have higher thresholds for felony larceny than Massachusetts. For example, Connecticut (\$2000) and Rhode Island (\$1500).
- Other states similarly set their threshold at \$1500 or higher. \$1500: Delaware, Georgia, Kansas, Maryland, Montana, Nebraska, Rhode Island, Utah. \$2000: Colorado, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and So. Carolina; \$2500: Texas, Wisconsin.
- Threshold amounts do NOT correlate with or raise crime rates. In Florida, a low \$300 threshold makes thefts above that amount a felony. Yet Florida still has higher larceny rates than Pennsylvania, which has a much higher \$2000 threshold.

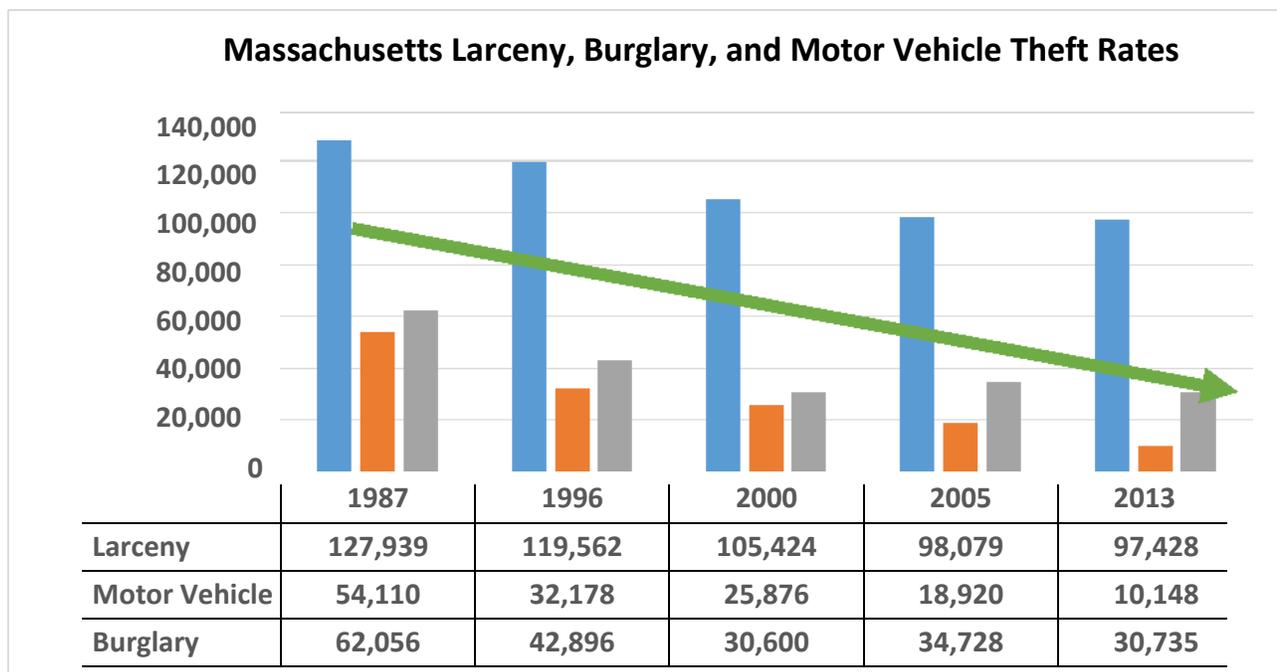
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## RAISING THE THRESHOLD DOES NOT INCREASE CRIME

The argument that crime will increase is a myth and not backed by crime statistics.

- Research on 23 other states that increased felony thresholds from 2001 has shown that increasing thresholds does not increase crime in the long run. Pew Charitable Trust, The Effects of Changing State Theft Penalties (Feb. 2016).  
[www.pewtrusts.org/research&analysis/the-effects-of-changing-state-theft-penalties](http://www.pewtrusts.org/research&analysis/the-effects-of-changing-state-theft-penalties)
- Rates of larceny and other crimes in Massachusetts have decreased since the last time the felony threshold for larceny was increased from \$100 to \$250 in 1987. If the logic of the argument that increasing a threshold will increase crime held true, larceny rates would not have decreased in Massachusetts.



Sources: MA State Police Uniform Crime Reports and MA Department of Corrections.

- > The Pew study found that threshold amounts do NOT correlate with crime. Florida has a low \$300 threshold and higher larceny rates than PA which has a \$2000 amount.
- > It strains credibility to claim that most people are aware of a felony threshold, let alone will fine-tune shoplifting to an amount below the threshold, especially if they are abusing alcohol or other substances.
- > There is no incentive to commit crime if the threshold is increased. Both senate and house bills (SB873 and HB967) keep warrantless arrest in place for shoplifting (G.L. c. 266, § 30A). Jail sentences remain and some fines are increased under the bills to reflect the new threshold.
- > Massachusetts police routinely file misdemeanor theft complaints and our state has an organized retail crime law (G.L. c. 266, § 30D) with 10 to 20 year prison terms and fines.